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# STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE

WM. J. ROBINSON, M.D.







**STORIES OF  
LOVE AND LIFE**



# STORIES OF LOVE AND LIFE

OF FACT AND FANCY WOVEN

BY

C

WILLIAM J. ROBINSON, M.D.

*Author of Never Told Tales, Sexual Problems  
of Today, Practical Eugenics, etc.*

*No book has a right to exist that has not for  
its purpose the betterment of mankind, by  
affording either useful instruction or health-  
ful recreation.*

—W. J. R.

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BY WILLIAM J. ROBINSON, M.D.



## PREFACE AND EXPLANATION

Certain facts had come to my knowledge, which seemed to me to possess a distinct social value and significance. In leisure moments, while crossing the Atlantic, in railway cars, while sailing the Swiss lakes or the Scandinavian fjords, on the verandas of hotels, I wove the gossamer thread of fancy thru the woof of fact, and the result are these humble but I hope useful stories.

I owe this explanation not to the public, but to my esteemed professional colleagues—whose good-will I would not forfeit for any literary laurels—who might think that it is not quite the proper thing for a physician of some eminence to spend—perhaps they would say, waste—his time in writing stories. They could forgive “Never Told Tales,” because the

## PREFACE

moral and utilitarian purpose behind those narratives was quite clear. The motive or moral of these stories is not quite so apparent, tho it is there.

Perhaps when they learn that not one hour have I purloined from the time which belongs to my practice and serious medical work, but that in weaving these stories, I have utilized those moments which others spend in inane small talk, in smoking, drinking and card-playing, I say when they learn this, perhaps their judgment will be tempered with mercy. For I repeat: No literary laurels would I exchange for the good-will and esteem of my esteemed professional colleagues.

WILLIAM J. ROBINSON, M. D.

Atlantic Ocean, N. Lat. 40°, 19", W. Long. 54°, 42".  
September 1, 1912.

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THE STORY OF  
MARGARET

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On

Leo Deutsch

WHOM YEARS OF PRISON AND EXILE  
HAVE NEITHER BROKEN NOR BENT



## MARGARET

### THE STORY OF A RADICAL COUPLE

THOSE who had not seen Dr. George Nelson for several years would not have recognized him. He had certainly undergone a remarkable metamorphosis, both physical and mental. Those who knew him when he studied medicine knew a pale, slim, thin-necked, sunken-cheeked youth, who, while not classically beautiful or even moderately pretty, yet produced an agreeable expression by his shock of black hair, bright lively eyes and animated facial expression. And he was full of enthusiasm about everything—about himself, his future, the future of mankind.

He had many lofty ideals, which he was ready to defend at all times against all comers. He had a ready flow of lan-

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guage and he was not only ready, but eager to participate in discussions and debates, private or public. In spite of his studies he was a regular visitor at most lectures—ethical culture, radical, single-tax, socialistic, and even anarchistic, and his delight was to pierce the bubbles of ignorance with the incisive shafts of his logic. Presumption could rarely hold out against the arrows of his biting satire. When George Nelson was announced to take part in a debate or discussion, the hall was always full. He was a-quiver with vitality and apt to be slightly arrogant, particularly after a successful verbal encounter. And tho somewhat puffed up with his own importance, he had few enemies. The number of his friends was much larger. They all liked the jolly, witty, lively, hopeful and idealistic George.

Was he poor? As poor as a church-mouse. He often did not know where



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his next meal was to come from, and many days his stomach had to be satisfied with one meal, and some days he went practically without any food at all. His average expenses were three or four dollars a week and this money he earned by giving private lessons and by translations from foreign languages. And while in this luxurious financial condition, he had the supreme audacity to get married. The temerity of youth knows no limits.

His young wife, who was willing to take the chances of sharing her life with George Nelson was Margaret, with whom he had been keeping company for about six months. Many were the people who were envying him his young girl wife. And well they might, for in their circle there were not many Margarets. Margaret was like a young Greek goddess and, hackneyed as the expression is, there is none that fits her better. A wealth of black hair, black, limpid eyes, rosy cheeks,

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a set of white pearly teeth, that never needed the dentist's services, a white slender neck, a healthy prominent bosom, which heaved deliciously under the slightest excitement, broad hips that indicated a well-developed pelvis,—such was Margaret, a picture of healthy, marvelously developed girlhood. What made Margaret more seductive and more charming was her utter unconsciousness of her seductive charm. She had none of the shallowness of the flirt in her. And she contemptuously resented and effectually nipped any attempts at flirting. Her lovely head was full of romantic notions. She dreamed of true love, and passionate, self-sacrificing, self-forgetting love, such love as was described in her favorite authors' novels. Marriage without love—she could think of no greater profanation. But marriage with love—no privations would be any sacrifice to her. And that's why she refused unhesitatingly one after

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another all the numerous proposals that she had received. Many came from rich suitors, business men and professional men, but she rejected them all; she could not think of a business man for her husband—business men were so prosaic; some of the professional men she favored, but it was not real love, the kind of love she imagined. She would marry only the man with whom she would fall deeply in love, preferably at first sight; and if she could have her choice she would prefer a poor student, a poor author or a poor artist. And when she fell in love with George, she did not care for his abject poverty, and was willing to marry him on the spot. In fact it was George who advised delay, until he was a graduated physician. Tho with every fiber of his body and soul he was drawn towards Margaret, he did not consider it right to have her share his hall-bedroom. But he was in his last college year, Margaret insisted

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that she did not care how poor he was—she had a position as private secretary, and she would keep her position until he was graduated; on the contrary the idea appealed to her to live in one small bedroom and to go out for their meals—and so they were married.

I regret to say, tho it may give a severe shock to some of my readers, that there was no religious ceremony at their wedding. They were free thinkers and they had peculiar ideas; they thought that where there was true love, the bond of union could not be made any stronger by the mumbled formula of priest or rabbi; and where there was no love, the union was unholy, priest or no priest. They went, however, down to City Hall where they were married by an alderman. Margaret objected to that too; she said that if she ceased to love him or he to love her, the piece of paper called the marriage certificate, would not hold either of them.

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But here George put his foot down.

“You know,” he said, “that I am liberal enough. But I am very sure of one thing. The man who under our present social conditions agrees to live with a woman as his wife without giving her the protection conferred by a religious or legal ceremony, is acting unfairly towards the woman, in fact, is a despicable rascal.” He was a regular attendant at socialistic and anarchistic meetings and he was used to strong words. “A woman who lives with a man without being married to him, is looked upon with such deep contempt by nine hundred and ninety-nine of every one thousand members of her own sex, and also by most men including the tradespeople, and her husband’s friends even, that it is positively cruel to subject her to that altogether unnecessary humiliation and to gratuitous insults. And it is positively criminal to bring children into the world with the handicap of bastardy on them.

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The children will certainly not be grateful for it, and if they should turn out to be more or less conservative—one can never foresee what one's childrens' opinions are going to be—they will hate and despise you. Then comes the question of property, which we radicals are supposed to care nothing about. Well we don't now, because we haven't any. But suppose that by working together we accumulated some. In case of my death, litigation might start and neither you nor our children would be certain of retaining a penny of the money, which we have accumulated by hard work. Why run any such risks? No, dearie, for a man and wife, be they as radical as they make them, to live out of legal wedlock under the present circumstances, is more than simply foolish. It is criminal folly, at least on the husband's side."

And so Margaret was persuaded to get legally married.

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They did not change their abode, but continued to live in George's hall-bedroom. Margaret prepared the scanty breakfast and the meager luncheon on a tiny oil-stove, and for dinner they went out to a Hungarian restaurant, where they dined for twenty cents a piece, and on holidays they spent half a dollar for the two. George continued to study hard, and Margaret kept her position.

George was graduated among the first, and became a full-fledged physician. It was great fun to run about hand in hand with Margaret, looking for an office and residence. They found one in a crowded part of the city, the furniture was taken on the instalment plan, a sign was put out in the window, and they started to wait for patients. Contrary to the statements in novels, contrary to grim reality in a large number of cases, it did not take long before the first patient appeared, it did not take long before the second came, in less

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than two weeks he had three confinements and before the end of six months George was busy day and night. He was bright, cheerful, confidence-inspiring and he knew his business. Besides he had a good deal of common sense,—something of the greatest importance in the practice of medicine. The individual fees were small, but they were frequent and numerous and before George knew it, Margaret, who kept the accounts, told him that his monthly income was three, four and then five hundred dollars a month! The starvation period was quickly forgotten, and of everything there was a superabundance. George soon joined several Medical Societies and Medical Clubs, and the few evenings he had free from practice he often spent with his medical friends. Margaret felt a little lonesome, but she knew that it could not be helped. George had to attend to his practice and had to show himself once in a while among his profes-



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sional brethren. But it rankled in her breast just a little bit—she did not let it rankle long.

The years passed—speedily for George, creepingly for Margaret. George was getting stouter from year to year, and this had an important influence on his life, on his thoughts and actions. People do not understand the tremendous influence which rapidly acquired obesity has on human character. It renders a man not only physically lazy, but also mentally sluggish, and frequently has a decided dampening, cooling effect on the marital affections. George was becoming decidedly, distressingly lazy. He hardly ever walked, having at his constant demand a carriage and an automobile. He gave up the harder part of the practice—confinements—but the patients kept on crowding his office, and his receipts amounted to one thousand dollars a month and more. Of course he no longer at-

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tended socialistic meetings. Not that he gave up his radical ideas, but he had no time. And then it wasn't just the proper thing for a prominent prosperous physician to mingle with common working boys, who showed no respect before anybody and who might contradict him in immoderate language as if he were their equal. However, he subscribed to radical literature and contributed to humanitarian causes. But he practically gave up reading; the only recreation he had now was in his private medical circle, where he often stayed up late playing cards. He became a passionate card player. People mentally lazy for serious work, are often passionate and clever card players. And Margaret stayed home, mostly alone and read books. . . . And once in a while she felt very, very dull, very, very lonesome.

Did George cease to love Margaret or did he love her any less than formerly?

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He was not aware of any change in himself. If he had been asked or if he had asked himself the question, he would have answered it indignantly and emphatically in the negative. And he probably would have been right. He loved her passively—or shall we say abstractly?—as much as ever. Only his *active* demonstrations of love were diminishing gradually from year to year, until they reached the vanishing point.

Wherein he made the mistake of his life,—a mistake of which so many men are guilty. Many men make the blunder, to a realization of which they are recalled sometimes too late, of forgetting that purely passive or abstract love is not sufficiently satisfying to a sensitive woman; and in this regard, fortunately or unfortunately, the radical woman is almost as feminine as her orthodox sister. Margaret certainly was. And she suffered; and she suffered more and more. And

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George was too obtuse, too self-satisfied, to notice it. And Margaret was too proud to let him see it.

Had George been told that Margaret was not very happy, he would have opened his eyes in surprise. Why? What was the matter? She had no menial work to do, she had all the help she wanted, she had all the money she wanted, and could spend on clothes or on anything else as much as she wanted; she could go to the theater—alone—as often as she wanted; in short she could spend her time and her money to suit herself—what else can a woman desire? Her material life was such an improvement over what it was before, and during the first year or two after her marriage, that she would have to be a very unreasonable person to feel unhappy or even dissatisfied. That's what George would have thought, if he had known that anything was the matter with Margaret. But he did not think at

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all, for he did not know anything at all. As we said adiposis makes people obtuse. Ask any competent physician about that.

George was getting rich and was becoming a person of consequence in his neighborhood. The principal part, however, of his income was now derived, not from his medical practice, but from something else. One of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an ambitious professional man, befell him: he began to make money in real estate. A patient of his who was in the business suggested to him a "bargain." He bought a tenement house, and in less than two months sold it with a clear profit of three thousand dollars. And this was the beginning of his downfall, as it has been of so many others. When a physician begins to make money in real estate, he, in the majority of instances, ceases to be a physician—physician in the noble sense of the word. His practice becomes irksome or even repul-

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sive to him. To run up flights of stairs, to have responsibility, to be wakened from a deep sleep, to have to watch the sick and moribund, and all for one, two or even five dollars a visit—when you can make hundreds and thousands by a turn of the hand—why, how absurd! And so the practice begins to be neglected. Troublesome cases and far-away calls are refused, and even the office practice is attended to in a perfunctory manner: you have to attend to so many patients before you make a thousand dollars, which in real estate can be made even before the deed is signed. What is the use bothering!

And that is what happened to George. He began to treat his practice as a matter of minor importance, and ceased to attend the meetings of medical societies. His real estate transactions occupied his attention now. And fortune smiled on him. Every deal he made brought him profits ranging from hundreds to thousands of

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dollars. But his financial successes did not touch a responsive chord in the breast of Margaret. On the contrary, she began to feel that the distance between George and herself was daily growing wider and wider. For his transactions brought him in contact with numerous prosaic, common and even shady characters—real estate sharks, money lenders, builders, inspectors, lawyers, etc.; these persons, who grated fearfully on the fine sensibilities of Margaret, were now becoming daily visitors and intimate associates of her once ideal and idealistic husband.

As a rule she was not visible when they came, but when she could not help meeting them, she treated them with coldness and ill-concealed disdain, which made George nurse a slight grudge against her. One morning he told her that he thought she ought to treat his friends more cordially. He thought she owed him that much respect. She answered that she

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would be ashamed to call such men his friends, and as for *owing* him any respect, respect, like love, was not owed; it could only be given voluntarily to those who deserved it. It was the first time that Margaret ever made a caustic remark to George, a remark that testified of suppressed excitement and irritation. Had he possessed his quondam alertness, he would have heeded the danger signal, and he might have prevented the oncoming of the storm. But George, it must be repeated again, had become obtuse and all his attention was absorbed in his financial transactions. He was now not only buying and selling, but he was building houses, and often he had to superintend matters personally; and he had become an expert in haggling with the contractors.

At thirty Margaret was remarkably pretty. When she was eighteen she looked like twenty, at thirty she looked like eighteen. In her walk and appearance



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she was more like a school girl than a married woman. Her mirror told her too that she was beautiful, and when she walked in the street the hungry glances of the passers-by told her that her healthy youthful charms were irresistibly attractive.

George "had no time" to accompany Margaret to any meetings or dinners, so when the monotonousness of staying home all the time began to pall on her, she began to go out alone. She made many friends, renewed old acquaintances and everywhere she was a more than welcome visitor. She was made much of by everybody, but particularly by the men.

She attended regularly the dinners of the Radical Club, which counts among its members all sorts and conditions of men and women. Men and women of all shades of belief and unbelief, men and women of all kinds of principles and lack of principles, gather at its festal tables.

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Liberal clergymen, progressive republicans and democrats, single taxers, parlor socialists, orthodox marxists, revolutionary socialists, philosophical anarchists and anarchists who believe in dynamite as the sole means of social salvation, vegetarians, free lovers, deep thinkers and people who only think they think, artists and near-artists, writers and would-be writers, editors and reportorial cubs, actors and actresses of various degrees of eminence—they all gather at its meetings to partake of a rather poor dinner at a dollar a plate and to listen to the paper and discussions of the evening, which are sometimes excellent, generally mediocre and occasionally somnifaciently dull.

It was at one of these meetings that Margaret met Mr. Hammond, John Hammond, well known in radical, literary and artistic circles. John Hammond did not have to work for a living. He lived on his income, which was left him provi-

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dentially by his father. He dawdled away his time—he painted a little, wrote occasionally a short story, which gave him entrée to the literary circles, and wrote dramatic criticisms and sketches of actors and actresses which secured him free entrée into many theatres. He had charming manners, dressed well, talked fluently, tho superficially, on all topics. His religion was pleasure, his god, his own ego. He believed that the time to enjoy life was here and now, and he meant to take from life all it had to offer spontaneously, and all he could wrest from it without too much effort. He was readily influenced by the charms of a pretty face, but the sensation he felt at the end of the dinner at which Margaret Nelson happened to be his *vis-à-vis*, was unlike any he ever experienced before. Her utter lack of affectation, her bright, limpid eyes, the untampered loveliness of her complexion, the uncorseted suppleness of her body, and her

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sane, advanced, tho withal pure, views of life—he was struck to the innermost depths of his not very deep heart.

He boasted of his immunity to the imbecile thing called falling in love, but he was in great danger of committing that very imbecile thing. He was by her side at the next dinner, and at every subsequent dinner. He asked permission to call, which Margaret readily granted him, as she enjoyed his company. George received Hammond coldly, later on—noticing the intimate friendship between him and Margaret—rudely. Instinctively, scenting a danger, he began to hate him. He would have forbidden him the house, but as a radical is not supposed to interfere with the personal liberty of his wife, he restrained from doing it. Besides he was just a bit afraid of Margaret, who lately did not seem to be her former self. But finally his feelings got the better of his opinions and judgment, as they always, or

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usually, do, and he wrote a letter to Hammond forbidding him the house, which was a dangerous and foolish thing to do. After this fateful letter, Margaret's coldness to George increased markedly; their relations became strained and they conversed but seldom and little. She still submitted at rare intervals to his embraces, but they were cold, perfunctory, apparently loveless embraces, and they were becoming more and more distasteful to her, and the intervals were becoming greater.

Three months passed. It was a bright, beautiful morning in May—the month of sunshine, of renewed hope, of renascent love, of rejuvenation and desire.

George and Margaret had finished their breakfast.

Margaret was unusually pale and agitated.

George was beginning to add some figures.

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"Now as well as later," murmured Margaret.

Then turning to George: "George, I have something to tell you."

"Just wait a minute," answered George. "You see I am busy."

"Your figures can wait, but if they can't," said Margaret, "I only want to tell you, that I am going to leave you—to-day—for good." And she began to get ready.

The simile of a piece of news acting like a blow on the head has been used so often that it is worn and threadbare. And still it is the most correct simile that we can use. The physiologic or rather pathologic effects are exactly the same. George felt as if he had received a severe blow on the back of his head. He became deathly pale, his heart stood still, his head began to swim and things seemed to be going around, his throat became instantly dry, but what he remembers most distinctly is

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the darkness that seemed to fill the room. The room was full of sunshine—he knew that, and still everything seemed to be dark, everything seemed to be assuming a black color.

“What do you mean?” he said in a hoarse, rasping but scarcely audible whisper. His voice seemed to him strange and not his own—and it wasn’t. It made Margaret turn around.

“You know what I mean,” she said. “This is not the time for meaningless phrases.”

He knew perfectly well. He also knew that it was useless to do anything, to say anything. He knew Margaret. He knew that her decision was irrevocable. He knew that she was lost to him forever. He knew that he would never see that dear beautiful, now so strangely pale and tense face again. And this knowledge came with such overwhelming suddenness that it

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rendered him, weak, limp, motionless. His mind became a perfect blank. It seemed to him that he was sinking into a terrible abyss and that a gigantic rock was crushing him from above, pushing him further down and rendering impossible any hope of exit. In a few seconds he lived thru a decade and he looked plainly ten years older.

Margaret seemed to have a perception of what was going on in George's mind. She was pained to see him suffer so, but she was gratified too. After all he still seemed to care for her. Had he at that moment thrown himself at her feet, had he run up to her and embraced her with his strong arms, had he begged to be given another chance, had he promised her that things would take a change and that they would begin life all over again, had he done one or all of those things which the masterful man knows how to use so efficiently, it is possible that Margaret would



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have stayed. It is possible. Nobody will ever know that to a certainty. Margaret herself doesn't. She only knows that she was moved with intense pity towards him. And perhaps her love towards him was not really extinguished, as she thought it was, but was only smoldering and required but a little effort to fan it into a strong steady flame.

But George did nothing, he made no effort of any kind. He was sitting dully, immovably, staring before himself, with his face contorted, a slight shiver running thru his body, and his knees shaking. And when he slowly looked around, Margaret was gone, and things seemed darker, blacker still.

Here is the irony of cruel fate. If the lack of a thing causes us intense excruciating agony, then its possession should cause us great ecstatic pleasure. But it is not so. Being deprived of air, we suffer intensely; having plenty of air does not

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make us happy. Deprive a man of water for any length of time, and his suffering is indescribable; supply him with water regularly, and he takes it as a matter of course. He experiences satisfaction in quenching his thirst, but no acute active pleasure. It is this that gives the pessimists their justification for asserting that the pain and suffering in this world are indescribably greater than its satisfactions and pleasures. Then again as to the amount of either which we can experience. The amount of pleasure is limited; the slightest excess brings satiation and displeasure or disgust. The amount of suffering a man may undergo is unlimited, both as to the variety of its aspects and to duration of the time.

The absence of Margaret made George undergo all the tortures of hell; he suffered cruelly, acutely, unceasingly. Why did not her presence, except in the first months, cause him acute continuous pleas-

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ure? George was sitting in the darkness, brooding dully. He was incapable of doing any connected thinking. The bell and the telephone had been going all afternoon, but he instructed the man to tell everybody that the doctor was out. He was not feeling well, and he would not see any patients. When night came, he threw himself on the bed, without undressing, without lighting the gas. He passed a fitful night, full of terrors and nightmares. In the morning, without partaking of any breakfast, he attended to some urgent calls, came back and locked himself in his office.

On the third day he received the following letter:

*Dear George:*

We were unable to discuss the matter calmly when I left, and I owe you this letter. We promised each other, that when love no longer bound us, we would go our ways. This time has come.

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You seem to have long lost any affection for me; for months and years you have not shown that you needed me. And I fear that I have lost my love for you. I could not love any person whom I could not respect, and my respect for you has been sorely strained during the last years, particularly the last year or two. I did not marry a real estate agent, a builder, a money lender. I would rather have you with your ten dollars a week and with your self-respect and ideals than with your riches and coarse or shady characters for friends. I was willing to share want and love, but am not willing to share luxury and neglect. I have considered the matter in my mind for many months. I would have left, sooner or later. But I love—I love John Hammond and am living with him now [a weak groan escaped him as he read this]. Under the circumstances, to continue living with you would be a sin. I am sorry for you, but we

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must all remain true to our personalities, and live according to our ideals. Make the best of it. I am sorry. . . . Be happy—as happy as you can.

YOUR MARGARET.

Had his senses been in proper working order, had his psychologic insight not been completely dulled, he might have perceived from the letter that Margaret still loved him, and a ray of hope might have illumined his pitch dark soul, a ray of joy might have warmed his cold freezing heart. But he saw nothing, he thought nothing. All he felt was that Margaret was hopelessly lost to him, and that his life henceforth had no object, no purpose. Only one thing the letter did: to his black despair and misery there was added the green monster of jealousy, and daily that monster dug its fangs into his heart deeper and deeper. At the thought, either by day or night, that Margaret was in that

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wretch's (that is the only way he thought of John Hammond) arms, he thought he would go insane. Several times he was at the point of ending it all by pistol or poison, but something that he himself could not explain held him back.

There began for him a drab, dreary, joyless existence in which the days were interminably long and the nights a never-ending nightmare. He became apathetic, careless of his appearance, and while he attended to his practice, he began to neglect his real estate business. He began to hate it, for he felt it was primarily that that lost him Margaret. Offers of great bargains he rejected with contempt. He neglected to collect the rents, to attend to the proper repairs, to demand or pay interest when due, and in many other details he was the despair of the business people with whom he had had negotiations in former days. They could not make him out. He who used to be so eager to drive a bar-

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gain, so shrewd in looking out for his interests, and so successful in piling up profits, seemed to have lost all taste for money. He walked about like a ghost and took as much interest in financial affairs as a ghost.

Then the crisis came. Values began to slump. His third and second mortgages became valueless, and he saw with mixed feelings of pain and savage delight how in a short time his fortune of two hundred thousand dollars had shrunk to twenty thousand,—the equity in the house in which he lived. He was indifferent. But soon this little handful of his former fortune began to be threatened. He was in danger of losing the roof over his head. A little of his former energy returned to him. He began to work at his practice. He rushed wherever called, any hour, day or night. He began again to take confinements, and a night call to a confinement was most wel-

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come to him as it saved him from tossing on his lonely bed, it saved him the tortures of sleepless nights, interrupted now and then by a nightmare. This was the worst thing he had to contend against now, an obstinate insomnia which resisted all powders and potions. And he began to run down. The people about him noticed it,—he didn't. If he did, he didn't care.

One morning, after a particularly bad night, trying to get up, he found that he couldn't. He had an excruciating headache, everything ached in him, and he felt as weak as an infant. He had been feeling badly for the last few days, but had paid no attention to it. "The beginning of the end," he murmured, but this was his last rational thought. His servant found him burning with fever and delirious. The doctors that were called in pronounced it typhoid with meningeal symptoms. He remained unconscious and delirious for many days, and in his delirium



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the names Margaret and Hammond occurred again and again. His brain seemed to be in constant agitation. Sometimes, while picking at his bed clothes, his face would be illumined by a blissful smile and he would murmur inaudible words; at other times his face would express anguish and suffering and his groans would go thru the heart of those around him, one person particularly. She would then go to his bed, smooth his brow, arrange the pillow or the ice cap on his head and quietly glide away. It was a long battle. Many times his life was hanging on a thread and several times the doctors thought, if they did not say so, that there was no more hope.

One morning he awoke, with his head perfectly clear, and all his senses superacute. Nature sometimes sends such moments to desperately ill people, just before the final act of dissolution. But he felt so weak, so weak, that when he tried

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to move his arm it was like trying to move a mountain. He gave up the effort and lay perfectly still. But his eyes were open. He did not know how long he had been ill, but he felt that he must have been desperately sick for a long time. And he remembered clearly some of the dreams that racked his tortured brain.

“Another one of those cursed dreams!” he muttered to himself with bitterness. For in the gloaming of the early dawn it seemed to him that he saw the outline of Margaret, reclining in a chair. “I must be in pretty bad shape if visual hallucinations are becoming so vivid, so real.” But no, his mind was clear, and there in the chair was certainly the figure of a woman, and it was not that of a nurse either. There was but one woman in the world who looked like that. “Margaret,” he called in a low voice, a voice that was full of hope and fear, of joy and agony. Instantly she was on her feet and near his

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bed. "What is it, dearest?" and there was so much, so much love, so much sweetness in her voice that it acted like a demulcent balm to his bruised body and crushed heart. "What is it, dearest?" she repeated. "At last, at last, thank Heaven. I could not have stood it much longer." "Thank you, Margaret, but I am afraid you came too late." "No, dearest (how long, he thought, since she had used that word), it is not too late. Don't talk. They, the doctors, despaired. But I nursed you back to consciousness, and I will nurse you back to health." "It is so good of you to say so, but—" she did not let him continue. She patted his head and forehead, she touched her dainty fingers to his lips, and he imbibed their aroma, as a thirst-parched man imbibes a cooling draught.

She closed his eyes and bade him sleep. After a little while his throat and lips began to work convulsively. He wanted to

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talk, but he found it difficult to articulate the words. With a woman's intuition, tho he had not pronounced a word, she guessed what he yearned to know, but found difficulty in asking. "No, dear, I have not come just for a visit," she said; "I have come to stay with you for good, forever." She did not add: "If you still want me." Not for a moment did the idea cross her mind, that he might not want her any more. She was sure that he longed for her more than ever, and that that phrase would have been hypocritical. And hypocrisy of every sort was foreign to Margaret's character. These words put new life into his soul. He remained quiet. But after a while he could not refrain from asking: "And—he?" "He has gone out of my life as if he had never existed. Don't worry about anything. Just get well."

And he began to get well. Not very rapidly, for his system was under-

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mined, but in about two months more he began to attend to his practice. He became apparently normal in every respect, and still something was lacking. If he himself did not perceive it, Margaret did. While he attended to all his affairs, it was done in an indifferent automatic manner. As if it didn't matter one way or another. It seemed as if something had snapped within him. A vital spring. There seemed to be no objective point. He knew he had to attend to his practice in order to make a living, but there did not seem to be any particular reason for making that living. He loved Margaret and loved her presence, but it was more the love of a child for its mother. He felt lonely and unhappy in her absence, but he did not feel buoyantly happy in her presence. Just a feeling of security and contentment, but not one of radiant happiness. In short he was in that peculiar sad state of mind, when one takes things just

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as they come. When the blows of fate do not hurt much and the smiles of fortune do not exalt much. A state of mind praised by philosophers, but very distressful to one's dearest and most loving. And Margaret loved George now more than ever in her life.

Pity alone will not generate love, but when a woman loves a man, and that man becomes the object of pity, if he suffers, if he needs her aid and protection, then her love becomes increased a hundredfold; for pity will often fan the dying embers of affection into a strong and steadily burning flame of love.

Margaret, the high-strung, saw that a life like this was not worth while. Some radical change had to be made. This was also necessary because George's health did not improve with the lapse of time. He remained thin, flabby, anemic and somewhat haggard. And lately he began to develop a slight "hack" in the morning,

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which Margaret did not like, tho he himself ascribed no significance to it. She feared he was running into consumption. Without George's knowledge she consulted a physician who knew them well. He told her frankly that he did not like George's physical condition, and that her fear might have some foundation, unless a radical change was made in his life.

Margaret did a good deal of thinking. One morning she said: "George, you know that we cannot go on living like this?" "Why?" he asked weakly. "Because it is not worth while," she replied. "You know that you get no pleasure out of life, and seeing your apathetic condition, I cannot take any interest in anything. It is not in order to lead such a life that we tied our fates together." "What would you want me to do?" he asked somewhat frightened, the paleness of his face becoming markedly accentuated.

"Nothing, my dear big baby. Don't

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fear.” And she put her arms around his neck and kissed him long and lovingly. “I shall stay with you no matter what happens, until death do us part. Only I want you to let me manage things for a while. You are sick. You have lost the greatest possession one can lose: *interest* in life. Without that, life is not worth living. I will try to restore to you what you lost. You have been running things, and you will admit you have not made a great success. Now let me run things for a while. But you must put yourself implicitly into my hands and ask no questions. All you will have to do probably will be to sign some papers.

“Dearest,” he answered, “you are right. I am sick. Sick in body, and sick in spirit. I will let you do whatever you consider best. You can do no wrong. I wish I had let you run things right along. But I love you just as much as I ever did. Perhaps, more so—”



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"Yes, dear, I know. In the abstract—yes. But a person whose physical and psychic back is broken cannot love passionately, and cannot express his love—properly. One need not be a physician to be a psychologist, and I fear, dear, that I am a better psychologist than you are, if you don't mind my saying so. I will have you love me the way you did during the first year of our married life."

Here she kissed him again and ran off to attend to some affairs. He looked after her with loving and admiring eyes.

The following few weeks were busy weeks for Margaret. She was gone several hours every day. And in the evening she was calculating, adding, subtracting, consulting travel and guide books, writing letters, etc.

"What are you up to, Margaret?" he asked.

"You will find out, dearest. For the present I am busy severing the tentacles

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that hold or might hold you to your past life.”

And he soon found out the meaning of these words. Every piece of real estate that George still owned, actually or nominally, was offered for sale and was disposed of at a sacrifice if necessary. All the mortgages he held were sold outright. Every bill was paid, every claim against him was settled. Finally the day came when the house itself in which they lived, with all the furniture in it, was sold. A few little trinkets and a few books—that was all that Margaret cared to keep.

When everything they possessed in the world was sold and when all the bills were paid, Margaret found that she had just three thousand dollars in cash. She was very happy. “Even more than we need,” she said. And George smiled. One thousand dollars she deposited in a savings bank, and for the two thousand dollars she got a letter of credit. Three

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days later they embarked for Europe.

And as they stood on deck watching the slowly receding city, Margaret said: "And now, dearest, we are beginning an entirely new chapter in our life. Bid America good-bye for two years. For we will stay away that length of time. Don't fear. I made all calculations, and on a thousand dollars a year we can live very comfortably in Europe." She had no fear of the future. She knew that George was clever and brainy, that his reputation as a physician was excellent, and that if he only regained his physical health and psychic equilibrium, he would have no difficulty in making a living.

They took the Mediterranean route, for their first objective point was Capri. Two months in this earthly paradise, under the influence of its balmy air, luxuriant vegetation and soft, easy-going people, made a new man out of George. The expression "a new man," "a new woman" has a

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certain justification in fact. Not only do the physical cells, under stimulated metabolism, become more rapidly renewed, but under certain conditions, the person's entire point of view undergoes a rapid metamorphosis, so that he or she can be called a new man or woman in the true sense of the word. George was becoming a new man. He began to look at life differently. For the first time in his life he began to experience that inexpressible feeling of *joie de vivre*, when one feels pleasure merely in being alive and does not ask himself any questions, why, whence, what for and to what purpose.

At first Margaret took care of him as of a little child. She did not let him do anything. She devoted her entire time and attention to his comfort. As he gained strength, he became fidgety and wanted to begin to do something. But she would not let him. "You are taking the rest cure and are under my professional care,"

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she said jokingly and he had to submit. She did not tell him at the time that in her management of him she was guided by the advice of a very clever physician. When she saw that he had really gained strength, she suggested that they take up the study of foreign languages—Italian and French. He accepted the suggestion with enthusiasm. And they studied together, they quizzed each other, corrected each other's translations—it was great fun.

There is nothing in the line of study that will make a person feel so young as the study of a foreign language. The study of declensions and conjugations, of irregular verbs, the cases demanded by various propositions, etc., transfers you into the years of childhood, and for the time being you are a child again. They found that within one month they could converse with the natives in the world's most beautiful language, and this af-

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forded them much pleasure. A little later Margaret suggested that they ought to take up the study of art. They did not expect to become real students of art, but something of the subject they ought to know. There had been a hiatus in their education in this respect as there is in the education of many radicals. They had read books on philosophy, sociology, political economy; they were pretty familiar with the world's best literature, but about art they knew nothing. And they ought to know something about it, especially as they were in the land of art. So they took up the study of art. He was getting stronger, and Margaret was getting dearer and more indispensable to him from day to day. They visited Naples, Rome, Florence, Pisa, Verona, Venice and other Italian cities and each city disclosed new treasures of art to them. They were living their real honeymoon now, with its pleasures, ecstasies and voluptuousness,

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and they felt that only now they were living.

"We are not only living now," she said, "but we are putting away a good capital for the future."

From Italy they went to Switzerland. Here nature disclosed herself to them in an entirely new aspect. Every day brought new beauties, new ecstasies. They took long walks, they climbed the mountains, they crossed the glaciers, and from week to week they felt they were getting younger, stronger, and wirier. Margaret knew that George was a new man indeed, and he felt it in every fiber of his strong body and vibrant soul. He acquired a broader outlook on the world, and what was more important for Margaret he acquired an imperturbable equipoise and sangfroid. Where formerly he would kick and grumble, now disagreeable accidents and trifles that cannot be avoided, whether traveling or at home,

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left him absolutely serene and undisturbed. Which is of great importance to a wife. Nothing so sure to mar the daily life or the vacation of a wife, as an irritable, fussy, squabbling husband, be that husband ever so loyal and loving. Margaret knew that now George would be a safe and sane man to live with.

It was a heavenly evening: everything calm and peaceful, the sky clear and blue, the air cool and yet balmy. The cows were wending their way home, playing sweet melodies on the bells around their necks. George and Margaret were sitting on the balcony of the modest little hotel built on the very edge of the water and were watching the fiery sun-globe getting ready suddenly to sink into the lovely lake of Brienz. In the distance were the rugged giants of the Bernese Alps. All was calm and peaceful, all looked eternally permanent. They felt not only supremely content, but happy.



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They felt that this sojourn in Europe was the wisest, the sanest step they could have taken. George said it was the best investment they have ever made (Margaret did not like the word investment). Neither spoke a word. There are moments when silence is more eloquent, more expressive than words can be.

"Dearest," he said suddenly, "I want to ask you something. You never spoke to me about—Hammond. At first, it was perhaps just as well. Maybe the wound or the scar was too fresh and it might have bled on touching it. But I have no fear now. I have fully recovered, and I know, perhaps *because* I know, that you are wholly and forever mine. It is not well that there be even a single dark point between us. Tell me about it, love."

"Does that episode still rankle or bother you?" she asked.

"No, I assure you, it does not 'bother' me, nor does it rankle; not in the least.

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But our avoiding it, may give either of us the impression that we are still afraid to touch it. Tell me how and why you left him, or any other details you care to impart to me."

"There is really not much to tell. The circumstances accompanying my going to him you know. But I soon perceived that he was a shallow, selfish fellow. Everything in him was superficial. He had not a deep thought, or a deep feeling. His radicalism was a put-on garment; which he would have readily thrown off and exchanged for a conservative coat if it paid him to do so. He had only one god and one ideal in the world to live for—that was himself. He seemed to be very happy at first, but I soon perceived that his satisfaction was not so much in me, as in his *victory* over me. I soon felt deeply ashamed of myself for having given myself to such a man. I hadn't been quite a month with him when I left him."

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"You did? And why didn't you come at once back to me, to your home? You knew that I would have been supremely happy to have you." He said this in a low, halting voice.

"Yes, I knew that. That I never doubted. But I felt ashamed, I confess, and besides I thought it would be too soon. I felt it would do you good to be a few months without me. Tho of course I never imagined what was going on. Had I known, I would have returned sooner. I was in Paris at the time, and as soon as I learned of your illness, I took the first boat and came directly to you. And what nights of torture and self-reproach I passed watching over you, while you were tossing unconscious and delirious!"

"And did he not make any attempt to have you come back to him?"

Margaret smiled. She saw that Hammond was still troubling George. Husbands are apt to show an unhealthy inter-

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est in their wives' loves, present and ex.

"Yes, he did. We were stopping in Paris in one of the largest hotels. My immediate reason for leaving him was rather a vulgar one. I noticed that he was carrying on with one of the painted chambermaids. I packed my luggage and moved over to another hotel. He came to see me, begged me, rather unconvincingly, and as it seemed to me not wholeheartedly, to come back. But I told him that he must never see me or talk to me again. And he saw that I meant it. He soon consoled himself with a flashy demimondaine. I met him walking with her on the Boulevard des Italiens the following night and on several following nights. And now, dear, let this be *finis* Hammond and *finis* the episode. You must never refer to him again. It is unpleasant, the memory of him leaves an unpleasant taste, so why bring it up again?"

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"No, dearest, have no fear. This is *finis* Hammond forever. While I was quite sure of your love for me, I confess I still feared that perhaps you also entertained some affectionate thought of him. Now, what you told me leaves me quite easy on this score."

"Oh, selfishness, thy name is man," laughed Margaret, and they indulged in a long ecstatic embrace.

George knew that in order to practice medicine successfully—successfully not only from a financial but from a scientific point of view—he would have to brush up on it considerably. No science or art is making more gigantic strides than medicine is. Let a man lose touch with medicine for five years, let him then pick up a medical journal and he will have difficulty in reading it without the latest edition of a medical dictionary. Hundreds of new words are coined every year. These new words mean something; they are not

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merely new conglomerations of syllables. They stand for advances in medicine: for new remedies, new methods of treatment and diagnosis, new surgical operations and technique, new facts, new theories.

George had been out of touch with medical progress not only during the past year, during their travels, but also for three or four years previously, during the height of his real estate activity and while Margaret was away. A deep interest in real estate transactions is not compatible with scientific or artistic pursuits, and when Margaret was away—why then he didn't care if this whole world had gone to pieces. In fact, an earthquake destroying and engulfing everything would have been welcome to him. But now he began to study as he studied when he was in the twenties. He became again a medical student and he matriculated as such in the various foreign universities. From morning to night he attended lectures, clinics, laboratories,

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hospitals, assisted at operations, took private courses, and devoured everything that was new in medicine. Margaret was afraid he was overdoing it and wanted him to moderate his ardor, but he said he felt splendidly and he wanted to make up for time lost. And while George was in the laboratories and hospitals, Margaret read, studied, attended concerts and lectures, cooked dinner and kept house. For they lived now in furnished rooms, and not in hotels. Hotels are not conducive to earnest hard work. The festive atmosphere therein is a discordant element. They thus spent four months in Berlin, three months in Vienna, about two months in the smaller German and Swiss universities and two months in Paris. And then George knew that he was up to the last word in the science and art of medicine.

At Boulogne they embarked for New York. The two years were over—just

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one week short of two years, and Margaret, who was full of romantic notions, took a steamer which was to arrive in New York just on the anniversary of the day they had left it two years previously. A happier pair than George and Margaret the big transatlantic greyhound did not contain, even among those—or perhaps least of all among those—who had suites of rooms with private baths and ate apart from the rest of the passengers.

It was on the eve of the day they were to arrive in New York. They were standing at the railing in a secluded part of the boat.

“To-morrow, dear, will be two years since we bade good-bye to New York,” said Margaret. “Do you feel better now than you did then?”

His answer was a passionate embrace.

And after a pause: “Do you know, love, that it is hard for me to associate myself



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with myself of two or five years ago? Abstractly, I know it is the same person, but concretely, practically, I can't make it out. And perhaps I am not. Under the influence of the rapid metabolism which I have undergone for the last two years and a half, it is possible that not a single one of my former physical cells has remained in my present body. Ergo I am a new man."

"You are a new man to me, dearest. You are as you were when I first met you, only much better, much wiser, much kinder." And here another long, passionate kiss put a stop to further conversation. When they arrived in New York—and their joyful entrance into the city of Mammon was only marred by noticing the rowdy manner in which the steerage passengers were handled. Margaret had one hundred dollars left out of the two thousand. They drove to a hotel, and it gave them a peculiar sensation to live like

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strangers in a city in which they had almost always been residents.

George thought they would stay in the hotel a day or two, but Margaret said, "No, as long as the hundred dollars would last." And they had lots of fun in those few days; they saw more of the city in these days than they had in twenty years before,—they went to theaters, to moving picture shows, and, altogether, behaved like two young people just married and disgracefully in love with each other. They felt as if they were on their first honeymoon—they could not afford a honeymoon when they got married—only everything seemed better, clearer, saner, more hopeful.

They took a house and furnished it, and very soon George had more practice than he could physically attend to. He took a reliable assistant, then another and still another, and he spends a good deal of his time in literary and social work. And

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Margaret is in everything, everywhere; she guides, advises and directs, and if he does not see her for an hour or two he feels an aching void. There is not a happier couple on the face of the earth. Their bliss is marred by only one thing: They have no children. But George is so wrapped up in Margaret that he feels the lack only occasionally.

Of one thing he is sure, that if Margaret left this earth before him, he would not survive her by twenty-four hours. He couldn't. Life without her would be so empty, so senseless, that it would be utterly unthinkable.

And here, for the present, ends the story of Margaret and George, a radical New York couple.



THEY  
WAITED TOO LONG

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On

Horace Traubel

WHO UNDERSTANDS AND LOVES  
MANKIND



## THEY WAITED TOO LONG

THE first time I met Rosbert and Lilith was at a fancy masquerade ball. They were dressed like a Scotch lad and lassie respectively, and they made so pretty a picture that they excited the approving admiration of all present. They not only made pretty pictures, they also gave the impression of pictures of health. He of medium size, stocky and well-knit, she tall, lissome, supple. He was nineteen, she was eighteen. There was joy in the faces and hope in the hearts of both Rosbert and Lilith. It did not need a very observant eye to notice that they were deeply, genuinely in love with each other. I was told that they were, or were about to be, engaged. "What a well-mated couple, and what healthy progeny they will bring into the world," thought I, as I watched them

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dancing with abandon. For they did look the pictures of perfect health and exuberant spirits.

I did not see Rosbert or Lilith for three years. At the end of that period, Rosbert made his appearance at my office to consult me for a trifling ailment—a slight bronchitis. I was still in general practice then. I asked him if he was married already. He answered in the negative, but his tone indicated that my question seemed to him preposterous. “Oh, no. We are still too young to get married.” I told him that I believed in early marriages. “And besides I am not yet making enough to support a wife in the proper style,” he replied. And Lilith, who accompanied him—they seldom went anywhere one without the other—smiled approval. And she was beautiful. The rosebud that I had seen three years ago was opening up into a full blown delicious rose.



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Again three years passed. This time it was Lilith that was not feeling very well. Or at least she was not looking very well. She felt a little languid, her appetite was not very good, she did not sleep as soundly as she used to; she always had been a very sound sleeper, she told me, and she had occasional headaches. "Otherwise" she was feeling very well. No, they were not married yet, but they expected to get married next year, surely. Rosbert expected a raise in his salary, and then everything would be all right. I examined her and found a plain case of chlorosis, and did the only thing we can do in such cases: prescribed a preparation of iron and arsenic, ordered more nutritious diet and more fresh air. I knew the cause of her anemia, knew what would cure her more quickly than any drug in or out of the pharmacopeia, and told her frankly that it would be a good thing for her health to get married. And Rosbert did not look

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so very well either. His face, always expressive of the joy of life and of the exuberance of good spirits, began to show the first signs of a little worry, of some dissatisfaction.

For the next four years I heard of Rosbert and Lilith only incidentally. I heard that he gave up his position because the promotion which he expected did not come, and went in business for himself. He was doing well for a while, but lately business was bad, in fact, very bad. I met him and he looked rather thin, worried and decidedly nervous. He began to have the apologetic air, which unsuccessful people, or people with a certain kind of weakness, have about them. I asked him how he felt, and he said he felt "very well, very well; yes, quite well, but I will come in to see you one of these days. Would have come in before, but was so busy." Of course, I knew he wasn't feeling very well, or even quite well. "And how is Lilith?"

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“Oh, she is fine. I’ll bring her in, too.” Poor boy, I thought. Tho he wasn’t a boy now—he was 29—his first boyish appearance at the masquerade ball impressed itself so upon my mind, that I always thought of him as a boy. And he was so thin that unless his facial lines were closely examined, he did look more boyish than ever.

In two or three weeks they made their appearance at my office. Where was the Lilith of yore? I was shocked when I saw her. She was anemic, her face was sprinkled here and there with quite a few pimples and comedones, her former prominent and graceful bust was decidedly flat, and she was just a bit stoop-shouldered. “Crow’s feet” were unmistakable, and there was no joy and no laughter in her formerly bright and laughing eyes. And her hair, her formerly magnificent abundance of blonde hair? There was no expression, no life in it. You didn’t know

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that there is such a thing as life and expression to hair? But there is. And by the appearance of the hair alone, we can sometimes judge of the person's health and mood. There was no life, no lustre to it, it looked like dead flax, like hair that had been long subjected to the blighting influence of peroxide. She certainly made the impression of a formerly beautiful but wilted rose; or perhaps the simile of a lily would be more appropriate. But one who understands could see that the wilting was not yet permanent, irremediable. One who understands could see that it needed but the vivifying influence of love, love in its full meaning, and not only in its platonic manifestations—to raise her drooping head, to put life in her eye and lustre in her hair, to fill out her bust and straighten out her spinal column.

I thought it was time to speak to them plainly, and I thought it my duty to do so. I told them that long engagements be-

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tween two loving people were injurious, sometimes terribly and permanently injurious. To suggest anything irregular to such strictly brought up church members—she never missed a Sunday service, and he but very seldom—would have been foolish and wicked. But I insisted that for the sake of their health they ought to get married. If they could not get married regularly, *i.e.*, have a public church wedding and then go and keep house, let them get married quietly in City Hall, let them remain in their respective parents' homes, but meet occasionally. As the marriage would be no secret to the parents, they could meet frequently without difficulty. Or they could both live in his or even in her parents' home. Or they could get a room in a modest boarding house. But to none of these propositions would either of them, she particularly, assent. No, when they do get married, it must be in the regular established fashion. They must have a

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big wedding, and they must be able to furnish a nice flat and keep a girl. But they were sure that before the year was over, they would get married. Things seemed to be going his way, and he was sure that in less than six or eight months, etc. "But you are losing the best years of your lives," I could not help interjecting. But they did not see things in my light. Or, perhaps, deeply in their souls they did, but they were indissolubly bound by the fetters of convention and the shackles of custom. "What fools these mortals be," thought I, prescribed them some tonics and dismissed them from my office and my mind.

For seven years I saw nothing of Robert or Lilith. I heard that he had gone West to try his fortune, and that they remained true and faithful to each other. Her parents were getting tired of the eternal delays and began to urge her to break up the unfortunate engagement.

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There was a wealthy middle-aged man who was anxious to marry Lilith. For while her physical charms were going, her spiritual charms, her tact, her delicacy of manner, were unimpaired. But Lilith would hear nothing of it. The greater the pressure brought to bear upon her, the stronger was her determination to remain loyal to poor Rosbert who had had such a hard time of it. Luck seemed to be against him. Just because he was so anxious to make money for the sake of Lilith, things would go wrong. He would break down and be unable to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion at the critical moment.

One morning, not long ago, a little shriveled old lady was ushered into my office. I didn't know her, and asked her her name and what I could do for her. With a painful smile she told me that she was Lilith. I have always been very bad at recognizing faces, and try as I might I

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could find no trace of resemblance to the Lilith I knew. "Rosbert's Lilith?" "Yes, Rosbert's Lilith. Why, have I changed so much?" I had to tell her that she had. It is very fortunate that people are as a rule themselves not fully aware of the changes in their appearance. If they were they would suffer too much. A few hypersensitive natures are aware of the ravages of time and disease and they do suffer cruelly. Lilith was now thirty-five or six, but she looked decidedly as if she were between forty-five and fifty, and in height she seemed to have dwindled down to one half. Brunettes wear much better than blondes. When blondes begin to go, they go very rapidly. A "squeezed and dried lemon" is a vulgar expression, but no more fitting expression could be found to describe Lilith. She looked as if she had been taken, run thru a press, all the juices squeezed out of her and then allowed to dry and wilt.



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My heart ached for this poor victim of our stupid social system—or shall we say victim of her own stupidity?

She told me that they had definitely decided to get married in two months. Robert was settling up his affairs in the West, and was expecting to be back in New York in about a month. No, he hasn't made very much money, but still he has made some and they decided to live in poverty, if necessary, rather than to go on living the way they have. "I wish we had taken your advice, which you gave us eight or ten years ago," said she, while a disobedient tear was running down her cheek. What she came to see me about was to get a prescription for Robert. He had written to her to see me and get a certain prescription which always used to help him, to have it made up here and mail it to him, as he had no confidence in the small Western drug stores. I gave her the prescription.

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Five or six weeks later Rosbert made his appearance at my office. He was alone. He looked wretched—haggard and depressed. Now that everything was settled, that the marriage announcements were sent out, he came to ask me if he had a right to get married. Between seventeen and nineteen he lived like most other boys do,—luckily he contracted no disease of any kind,—but since he fell in love with Lilith he had led a strictly virtuous life. He didn't like to speak about it, but during the last few years he noticed certain symptoms which made him fear that he was not perhaps quite fit to get married.

I examined him and found that he was utterly *unfit* to get married. What was to be done? To recall the marriage announcements, after an engagement which was becoming a joke on account of its long duration? That was out of the question. And besides to delay the wedding, in order to undergo treatment, delay it for

## THEY WAITED TOO LONG

how long? Treatment would have to be continued for many months, and even then it might be of no value on account of the long standing of the complaint. To break it off altogether? Perhaps this would be the best, but the chagrin and disgrace would surely break Lilith's heart. After she has sacrificed her youth, after she has become an old woman waiting for him, to remain alone in the world! For now she could hardly expect to make another match.

The decision we arrived at was that to Lilith was to be explained the exact state of affairs and that the decision was to be left in her hands. I was to break the news to her. Her bitter smile was painful to behold, but her decision was what I expected. She certainly could not be worse off than she was now; she will have at least Rosbert's constant companionship, and she will not be an object of pity and a butt of ridicule among her girl friends. And

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so the marriage will take place at the announced date. But there is no joy in the face and no hope in the heart of either Rosbert or Lilith.

. . . . .

They were married three months ago. They live peacefully and harmoniously, but there is no joy in the face and no hope in the heart of either Lilith or Rosbert.

# WAS SELMA JUSTIFIED?

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By

A. Jacobi, M.D., LL.D.

A GOOD MAN, A GOOD PHYSICIAN AND A GOOD  
FRIEND. MAY THE YEARS CONTINUE TO SIT  
LIGHTLY ON YOUR SHOULDERS.



## WAS SELMA JUSTIFIED?

**W**E had just left the incomparable Bay of Naples. The thousands of lights from the city, from the Castel Nuovo, from the Posilipo, were mingled with the millions of lights on the clear, cloudless sky above. The Mediterranean was lying like a bright freshly polished mirror before us, and Vesuvius smoked in the distance. If there was any one on board into whose soul this glorious night and enchanting environment did not cause a flow of peace and good will, that man must have had a very bad conscience indeed.

The after-dinner parade had ceased and all was quiet, comparatively quiet, on deck. Our little group had as usual assembled on the bench behind the smoking room, and we were exchanging desultory

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remarks about the enjoyable day we had spent in Pompeii. The real discussion was to come later. Oh, we were discussing things all day and late into the night. We were dubbed by the other passengers "The Ocean Debating Club." The personnel of our group was a rather interesting one. It consisted of Dr. William Bonner, a well-known German physician, whose great pride was his participation in the revolution of 1848; Father Clancy, a learned Jesuit, a remarkable linguist, who in spite of his strict and sincere adherence to the teachings of the church, was broad-minded enuf to enjoy listening to Dr. Bonner's infidel and revolutionary arguments. I have a suspicion that before going to bed the good father prayed for the sturdy old doctor's soul. The third member of our party was Giacomo D'Annunzio, a cousin of the writer, himself an artist and a voracious reader; and the last, and least, was myself. Tho the



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acquaintance was made on board the ship only nine days previously, it had quickly ripened into a real friendship. You see, we were about the only four "real" intellectuals on board. As to the other passengers, why, the males spent their time playing penuche or poker, smoking and drinking, while the females were playing whist or cultivating their minds with the six best sellers.

As the members of our group found one another's company all sufficient we rather kept aloof from our fellow passengers, and they let us alone. And we discussed things. How we discussed! Time we had a-plenty. There was not a moral, ethical or sociologic question that was not passed by us in review. The subject on the tapis for that night was the important and interesting question: Is morality an absolute entity, or does the standard of morality change with the times, with the country, with circumstances? Or, as

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D'Annunzio put it, can an action which is universally considered wrong and immoral become right and moral under certain circumstances?

Dr. Bonner, D'Annunzio and myself naturally took the affirmative, while Father Clancy, who, by the way, stoutly denounced as false the generally current opinion that the Jesuits ever said that the end justified the means, stood unequivocally on the negative side. D'Annunzio who had visited Russia and witnessed the horrors committed by the Russian officials, maintained that even murder at times became justifiable. He gave instances of some governors of provinces and some police officials who spread death and desolation wherever they went, who were proved guilty of inciting massacres of innocent people, who perpetrated indescribable cruelties on male and female political prisoners, and to assassinate such brutes—who are probably insane or they

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would not be so cruel—maintained D’Annunzio, was not only justifiable, but was a duty incumbent upon every intelligent citizen. Father Clancy was shocked at such a horrid doctrine. “No, murder is murder, no matter by whom or for what purpose perpetrated. And he who kills a Russian official, tho the purpose is noble, I will not deny that, is in the eyes of God as much of a murderer as he who kills for plunder.”

And then the discussion grew more animated than ever. Examples were given by the score, but Father Clancy would not budge. Dr. Bonner, who, in spite of his eighty years, was a passionate debater, was unusually quiet this evening. And I also was a quiet listener. Father Clancy and D’Annunzio were the combatants in this evening’s tournament, and we looked on and listened.

“But don’t you admit that under some circumstances a lie may become permissi-

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ble? Don't you admit that there is such a thing as a white lie?"

"No, amico mio, there is no such thing as a white lie. All lies are black."

At these words Dr. Bonner stirred in his chair, removed his cigar from his lips, threw it overboard, looked at his watch, and said:

"If it were not near eleven I would perhaps tell you a little story. But it is too late. You may want to go to your state-rooms. And then I am afraid I might bore you."

Of course we objected to any such supposition and we begged the doctor to tell us his story. We promised to be interested and not to feel sleepy, even if the telling of the story took until morning. The doctor remained silent for a while, lost in memories. We did not disturb him. At last he commenced, in his low, even voice:

"It is sixty years since the drama I am

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going to relate to you took place. We are now in the year 1908, and this took place in 1848, in the unforgettable 1848, when every people on the European continent, big or little, seemed to feel a whiff of freedom, and began to straighten its back and pull at its chains, in the hope of freeing itself from its centuries-old fetters. The people! When I say the people, I mean a few noble and self-sacrificing spirits, for the people is inert, and the freedom, for which its best sons die, has to be rammed down its throat. But for the noble leaders, the people would never advance—they would be now where they were three thousand years ago. The revolution of 1848 penetrated, I said, every country of Europe—every country, that is, except Russia. But then Russia really belongs to Asia, and not to Europe. In Russian Poland, however, there was a slight ripple. The patriotic Poles thought that the time had come to throw

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off the Russian yoke, and to establish a constitutional monarchy. And dearly they had to pay for their rashness. The butcher Nicholas, who was at that time gracing the Russian throne, gave orders to repress the rebellion without delay and without mercy; all Poland was put under martial law and the governor and military commanders were given *carte blanche* to do as they pleased with the Polish people. Blood was running freely and thousands of innocent men and women—boys and girls—were thrown into dungeons, knouted unmercifully to extort confessions and then hanged or shot in bunches.

“The leader of the revolution in Warsaw was a young doctor, Arnold Bruno. I knew him well and we were intimate friends, tho I was only a youth of twenty, while he was thirty-two. He belonged to the richest and most aristocratic family in the town: he enjoyed universal love and

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esteem, for the kindness of his heart knew no bounds. Not only would he never charge anything to the poor—there are many doctors who always treat the poor free—but he would always furnish from his pocket the medicine, wine, food, and would pay for a nurse whenever required. He could afford it, and he loved the poor; he loved humanity at large. Once in a while nature does bring forth a human being that loves its fellow human beings deeply, sincerely, without expecting a monument for it, without a desire to get into the newspapers. And as said, his love for his fellowmen was reciprocated. And when he married the beautiful, noble and high-minded actress Selma, Selma who, tho but two years on the stage, was pronounced the greatest actress that the world had produced, the whole city sent congratulations. It was a love match, of course, and a more loving couple the world has never seen. They were completely

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wrapped up in each other, and they lived and breathed for each other. Life to one without the other seemed unimaginable. For five years they lived a life of perfect bliss, of unmarred happiness. And nobody begrudged them their happiness. Nobody, except Muravin, the brutal, degenerate, merciless governor of the province. His face would assume a purple color, his eyes get bloodshot and the temporal arteries pulsate violently, when he passed the Brunos on foot or in their carriage. For he had a violent passion for Selma, and when she was on the stage he made persistent advances to her. She repulsed the brute indignantly and threatened to call for aid, if he ever approached her again. He kept away, but his passion was not quenched. On the contrary. And when the marriage of Selma to Arnold Bruno took place he was near apoplexy. And he hated Bruno with a hatred of which only such beasts are capa-



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ble. Pardon me for using such harsh words, but I cannot speak calmly of that man. Sixty years have passed, and my blood still boils when I think of him—and I remember his brutal face, as if I had seen him yesterday. He hated the Brunos, but he had no opportunity to wreak his vengeance on them. The revolution afforded Muravin such an opportunity, and he availed himself of it with fiendish glee.

“When the news of the uprisings in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, etc., reached Poland, the people became restive. Cruelly suffering under the brutal Russian yoke, they decided to break the hateful chain—or to die in the attempt. Bruno was doubtful as to the outcome of the conflict, but he threw himself into it with heart and soul. He could not stand the poverty and the suffering of his people, and he thought the attempt was worth while. He belonged to those

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who believe an unsuccessful rebellion better than no rebellion at all. He gave all he possessed to the cause, and he worked for it, literally, day and night. Public speeches, committee meetings, war councils, kept him away from home most of the time. Selma saw very little of him those days. Her heart was breaking, but every morning when bidding him good-bye she blessed him with an encouraging smile. Noblesse oblige. The fate of a people is more important than our personal happiness, and so she did not interfere, but helped him in his work. And when he was gone, she cried in despair, for she knew the end. I found her crying many times. But if Bruno's steps were heard, her face would change at once, and I doubt if he ever suspected what she was going thru.

. . . . .  
"The 'revolution' was over. Thousands of people were brutally massacred, hun-

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dreds of women were outraged by the drunken soldiers, who were expressly given license to do as they pleased, and the leaders were in hiding or in prison. Arnold Bruno was in prison.

“Let me quickly pass over the scene of the arrest. I was in the house at the time. I shall never forget the sudden awakening by the violent knock at the door, the sullen faces of the soldiers and the fiendish expression of Muravin, who conducted the arrest in person. The anguish on the face of Selma when the handcuffs were put on Arnold was something fearful to behold and—”

Here Dr. Bonner broke off. It was apparently hard for him to continue. We remained in respectful, subdued silence. After a moment Dr. Bonner collected himself sufficiently to be able to proceed. He continued:

“Yes, it was something terrible to behold and if I live another eighty years I

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shall not forget. It pierced me thru the heart like a knife. But Arnold did not behold it. For when she threw her arms around his neck to bid him adieu, her face was calm and even cheerful, and she told him not to lose courage, not to feel despondent, that everything would be all right, that she would at once appeal to his and her influential friends and relatives, that within a few days he would be free.

“After a farcical trial by the court-martial, Arnold was condemned to death. Everything possible was done to stop the execution of the sentence. Money was spent freely by Arnold’s parents and relations, but all in vain. Muravin had represented Arnold to the higher authorities as the ringleader of the rebellion, as one who always sowed discontent and disrespect for the powers that be, and intimated that his position would become untenable, if Bruno were pardoned, or even if his sentence were commuted. An ex-

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ample had to be made. Poor Selma suffered atrociously, but very little of what she was going thru could Arnold notice during the brief visits which she was allowed to make to him twice a week, under the argus eyes of the two gendarmes.

“Imbued with the old superstition that the czar or king or emperor is less cruel than his minions—as if the latter were not mere tools executing the distinct or implied orders and wishes of the former—she journeyed to St. Petersburg, and after endless trouble, after endless humiliations, she was admitted to the czar’s august presence. A look at his brutish face convinced her, as she told me, that her mission was in vain. But she laid the case before him, pleaded with all her heart and art. He listened coldly. “No rebellion can be tolerated in my domain, and no mercy can be shown to revolutionists.” And he indicated that the audience was over. She left the winter palace as if in a dream,

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and she preserved but a confused memory of how she reached Warsaw. She was unrecognizable when she reached home. Again, I must say, if I were to live another eighty years I would not forget her face. Such anguish and despair I have not seen since, neither on a living human face nor on a picture. Why wasn't a painter there to depict and eternalize this acme of human anguish and misery!

"But she knew she had to see Arnold the following day and—the will power of that girl (she was only twenty-five at the time) was marvelous—she at once began to pull herself together. The next day, tho pale and weak, she appeared calm. I accompanied her that day to the prison. When the door of the miserable dark cell opened, her face—I watched her closely—assumed a cheerful expression, and I am sure Arnold had no suspicion of what she was going thru.

"What did she tell Arnold? She told

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him a lie, Father Clancy, a deliberate lie. This lie, however, sinks into insignificance in comparison with the much bigger lie which she told him a few days later. To return. She told Arnold that the emperor received her graciously, said he would give the matter his personal attention, and while he did not commit himself, he gave her to understand that she had nothing to fear, and 'tell your husband to hope for the best.'

"This pious lie had a cheering, vivifying effect on Arnold. He needed it. For a great change had taken place in him. I see I have not mentioned it until now. Yes, a great change. His spirit was completely broken. He was going thru a period which comes into the life of every reformer and revolutionist, except perhaps the most exalted fanatic, when he begins to ask himself: Was it or is it worth while? Is the game worth the candle? He needn't go so far as to ask: Are the

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‘people’ worth the sacrifice, is it worth while that I should give away my life for them? He needn’t go so far, I say, to feel in despair. Let him only begin to ask: Is my way the right way, is revolution or violent reform really the best method to advance, and to increase the happiness of humanity? and he is in great danger of falling into the slough of despondency. And Arnold did ask himself these questions, as Selma could notice from her brief interviews with him. When he saw, he said, that the very best men in the country, the most intellectual and the most kind-hearted were in exile, in the Siberian mines, in subterranean dungeons, shot or hanged, then he thought that the sacrifice was too great, that the method of warfare was a wrong one, and that the people were not only temporarily but ultimately the losers thereby. No nation can far advance whose men and women of the highest type are systemat-



## WAS SELMA JUSTIFIED?

ically weeded out, either by killing them outright or by slow torture in prisons.

“And so Arnold doubted whether he did right in participating in the revolution, and these doubts increased his suffering. And besides he became imbued with a terrible desire to live. Many people, not only thousands, but millions of them, think they do not care for life particularly. But as soon as they get seriously ill, or when they feel the approach of death, every fiber of their body and soul begins to quiver, and they begin to hold on to life with a passion and despair which excite the deepest pity in friends and relatives. With every fiber of his strong, healthy being Arnold revolted against the thought of death. The solitary confinement had a terrible effect on him. Forbidden to see a living being, except his wife for a few minutes twice a week under the eyes of soldiers, forbidden to read or to write, or do anything at all, Arnold

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suffered tortures, and these sufferings affected his character as well as his body. He became very irritable. And he once told Selma that he feared she was not doing all that was possible in order to save him. What Selma felt at these words can be better imagined than described. But not a syllable of reproach did she utter. She felt instinctively that it was his intense love for her—a love and a passion, that could now find no exit, no safety valve—that made the imprisonment so much harder for him, that made the thought of death such a torture to him. She assured him that everything possible was done and that she hoped to receive soon good news from the emperor.

“And then Selma—poor Selma!—decided upon a desperate step. She decided to go and see Muravin personally. She knew it was a terribly dangerous step and she had very, very little hope of accomplishing anything—but if there had

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been one chance in a million to save Arnold, and if she had to pay with her life for that chance, she would have paid it gladly. Some of you may consider such a love pathologic, abnormal: but the deepest depths of love that a woman is capable of for a man, especially if the man is suffering and unhappy, have not been explored yet, and until this is done we have no right to designate any kind of love as abnormal or pathologic.

“Selma wrote Muravin asking for a private interview. The answer came promptly, making the appointment late for the evening of the following day. He was too busy to see her on official business in the daytime, he said. Selma hesitated to go, and trembled as she went, but go she did. When she was shown into his somber, prison-like office, when she saw the peculiar brutish passion-distorted expression on Muravin’s face, she wanted to go back. But it was too late. The door

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was locked behind her. She began to plead for Arnold's life; he listened with a cruel sneer; she pleaded and pleaded; he only sneered. It seemed to him a huge joke. She finally threw herself at his feet, and this, instead of softening the brute, threw him into a fit of frenzy. His physical strength was proverbial. . . .

"In an hour, Selma, outraged, utterly crushed in spirit and in body, was shown out of the room. How she ever reached home was a marvel. Her will-power was truly superhuman. But as soon as she reached home she swooned away, and it took two devoted physicians over two hours to bring her to consciousness. But all night and the entire following day she kept on fainting, sobbing and shivering. It was pitiful to look at her. She seemed to have shrunk, to have become a little child. Every few minutes a convulsive spasm would go thru her body, she would give a violent start, and look about her

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with large, staring, frightened eyes. The doctors were afraid for her life or reason.

"We all trembled. But she pulled herself together.

" 'No. I must not die; not yet. I must see Arnold once more. And I have something to tell to Vladimir.' I haven't mentioned, have I, that Selma had a brother, a high-strung, hot-headed youth of twenty, who loved Selma as passionately as a lover, and who would have been ready at any time to make any sacrifice for her.

She sent for Vladimir, and when he came in she asked everybody to leave the room. She whispered something to him, whispered it so low, so low that he had difficulty in understanding her. But when he understood he trembled from head to foot.

" 'I will kill the scoundrel, even if I have to forfeit my life for a certainty.'

" 'I expect you to do it, my dear,' she

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answered. 'It is a mortal, unpardonable sin to permit such a monster to live. He is the incarnation of everything cruel and wicked, and he sows misery and death wherever he goes. But you must not attempt anything now. He is well guarded now and he is constantly on the lookout. Wait a year, or five if necessary, only you must make sure that when you strike the blow, you do not miss your aim.' "

Dr. Bonner stopped here. The narrative was tiring him, and toward the end the pauses were becoming longer and more frequent.

As we were waiting for the doctor to proceed, Father Clancy murmured more to himself than to us: "Mustn't take the law into one's own hands. Should leave vengeance to God."

A spark thrown into dynamite could not have produced a more violent effect than these words produced on Dr. Bonner. The change was instantaneous.

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We did not recognize him. He moved to the edge of the chair, sitting up erect, threw away his cigar, which he had lit a few minutes before, and proceeded to grill Father Clancy in a fashion of which we did not consider him capable. The young revolutionist of sixty years ago was before us. I wish I could remember his exact words. But their intent is perfectly clear to me. He spoke to the effect that this teaching about leaving vengeance to God has been Humanity's greatest curse. Every tyrant, every royal oppressor, every official murderer, has had the aid of this pernicious doctrine, and all the horrors and cruelties perpetrated by officials have gone unpunished on account of it.

"Your church, Father Clancy, as well as other churches, has always been on the side of oppression, on the side of obscurity, on the side of tyranny. Whenever a king or a pope wanted to banish, to im-

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prison, to burn, to murder individually, or to assassinate by wholesale, your church never failed to give its sanction; but whenever an exhausted and exasperated people wanted to put a stop to the official misdeeds, wanted to rid itself of a monstrously cruel king or a degenerate emperor, you always cried: 'You must not take the law into your own hands; the king is a sacred person'; and when the royal brutalities were too clearly apparent to everybody, you played your last card: Leave vengeance to the Lord. The non-resistance doctrine would be all right if everybody were guided by it. But preached as it has been for twenty centuries to the disinherited and downtrodden only, it has hindered progress terribly. Why, without that enervating doctrine we would have been a thousand years further advanced than we are now."

And in this strain spoke Dr. Bonner for a long time, Father Clancy remain-



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ing silent. He did not try to interrupt or to contradict him. After a little while, Dr. Bonner got up, bade us good-night, and was about to retire to his stateroom, but we were all deeply interested; we wanted to know the end of the story in which, we felt, he played more than the rôle of a mere spectator, and we implored him to stay on deck and tell us the end. If we were interested in Arnold's fate, we were much more so in Selma's, to whom our hearts went out in longing sympathy. Dr. Bonner rested a while, asked for a glass of Rhine wine and resumed the story:

“Selma could not have slept a wink that night. There was a frightful pallor on her face, her eyes, deep-sunken and large, shone with an unearthly splendor; we could see that she was at the highest point of nervous tension. We feared that something would soon snap in her. But she prayed for a little more strength, a

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little more endurance. Arnold's execution was to take place in three days, and this was the last day she would be permitted to see her husband.

" 'I still have one duty to perform; oh, for the strength to perform it properly, so that Arnold notices nothing. . . . I must, I must. I know it requires superhuman strength, but I must.'

"And swaying to an fro she went into her room. When she came out we were shocked at the change; in fact, we did not recognize her at the first moment. She had put on her gayest dress and hat, she had used paint and powder liberally but skillfully, and she looked as happy and gay a creature as ever she did before the terrible calamity came into her life. Only a most experienced observer and psychologist could have noticed that under this calm and cheerful exterior a storm was brewing, a heart was breaking, nerves were snapping, a brain was reeling.

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“When she came to the prison she found Arnold in the deepest despair; he looked weak, shabby, spiritless and anything but the picture of a great revolutionary leader. Had he been led to the execution in that condition, the former popular hero would have fallen greatly in popular estimation. Our old perverted ideas are more particular as to how a man dies than as to how he lives. And still it is much easier to die a hero than to live like one all thru one’s life.

“But Arnold could not reconcile himself to the thought of death. And it was this knowledge, this fear that her Arnold would disgrace himself, would go to his untimely death like a coward, that helped her to go thru the supreme test. She threw herself on his neck, kissed him passionately and began to talk to him in a low voice. The jailers, who knew this was the last interview, showed some delicacy in keeping at a distance and permitting

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the two to talk without interference. After the first few words Arnold brightened up, life came into his eyes, he stretched his legs and stood up erect—in short, he became Arnold of the former days. The interview lasted longer than usual, the guards became impatient, but with a smile they could not resist, she begged them for an additional half hour, and they yielded. The time for the final parting came. She kissed him passionately and her last words were: “So remember, dear, courage and a triumphant smile on your face; and then we will be together, never to part again.” He waved her a cheerful *au revoir*, and in a buoyant high-spirited mood he settled down to wait for the day of his execution, which was to be his day of deliverance.

“What did the poor girl tell him? What strange tale did Selma whisper in his ear, that at once carried him from deep

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despair to hopeful buoyancy? I'll tell you.

"Poor Selma told him that she had received that morning an order from Muravin to come at once. That when she came, he was most kind to her and showed her a letter from the emperor, giving Arnold a full pardon. But the emperor wished to give the thing an impressive and melodramatic setting; he therefore gave orders that the pardon should remain a deep secret; that the preparation for the execution should be proceeded with in the usual way, and only just before giving the order to fire, would Governor Muravin read the ukase of his gracious and merciful Majesty, bestowing the full pardon upon Arnold. It will have a better effect on the people and it will help considerably in pacifying them.

"Arnold swallowed the whole story. Everybody else in his place would have. Nobody would have suspected for a mil-

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lionth of a second that a human being would be capable of telling such a lie without betraying himself or herself.

“And, by the way, Father Clancy, do you think Selma was morally justified in telling that terrible—I call it divinely sublime—lie?”

But Father Clancy refused to commit himself this time. And Dr. Bonner continued:

“Whatever Father Clancy may think of the morality of Selma’s act, it had an excellent moral effect on Arnold. He went to the execution—which he thought would be no execution at all, but a liberation—bravely, smilingly. There was a spring to his walk, and he carried his beautiful head high and proudly. The admiration of the people for their hero was greater than ever before, and, for many decades after, the people talked of the insouciance and courage with which Arnold met his death. And when he noticed Selma smil-

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ing and waving to him with her handkerchief, he smiled back and waved her a kiss. (On account of his high social position he was permitted to meet his death standing and unbandaged.)

"When the order Fire! was given and the twelve bullets riddled his body, an expression of painful surprise seemed to come to his face. But death was instantaneous and he sank in a heap. And as Arnold sank, another report was heard, and poor, noble Selma fell dead, shot thru the heart. Poor thing. She could not, she would not live without Arnold, with this last horrible scene, which was made a thousand times more horrible by the presence of the triumphantly sneering Muravin, constantly haunting her. Peace be to her dear, sweet soul. Her grave, I learn, has been kept green these many years, and is a place of pilgrimage for the romantic young ladies of the town.

"What else is there to tell? Very little.

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A year passed. It was evening. Muravin was sitting on a bench in a public park, listening to the military band. Selma's brother, dressed like a foreigner—to all intents and purposes an English dandy—was walking to and fro behind the bench. He was watching for a signal. As he perceived the waving of a handkerchief, he turned on his heel and in the fraction of a minute he was behind Muravin, pressing a pistol to the back of his head. In another fraction half of Muravin's head was blown off. A tumult arose, but Selma's brother was gone, the carriage that was waiting bearing him with the utmost speed to the residence of a friend."

"What became of him?" we asked.

"In another week he crossed the frontier in disguise and very soon we find him studying medicine in Germany, under an assumed name, of course. After his graduation he went to America, where he became a very prominent physician."



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"Is he still alive?" we inquired.

"He is right before you," answered Dr. Bonner.

We were reverently silent.

And the steamer glided along the smooth aqueous mirror, and the golden stars twinkled as if they were asking: "Why, why, do you humans cause one another so much misery?" And the moon scattered its cold and indifferent rays in all directions.

And then the bell rang clear and distinct in the pure Mediterranean atmosphere, telling us that it was 1 A. M., and we all went to our staterooms to court the embraces of the beneficent tho occasionally cruel god Morpheus; cruel, for the most troubled souls, who need his gift of oblivion the most, often pray for it in vain.

Poor, noble Selma!

Was she justified?



LOVE: A LITTLE STORY FOR  
FREE LOVERS

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By

Rose Pastor Stokes

AN EARNEST WORKER IN HUMANITY'S VINEYARD



## LOVE: A LITTLE STORY FOR FREE LOVERS

NATE, destiny and luck are anachronistic terms which should be eliminated from the vocabulary of thinking men and women. But chance and accident still play an important rôle in our individual existences. Often a greater rôle than our most carefully worked-out designs.

A brief, aimless stroll will sometimes change the course of a man's life. It changed Arnold Trolling's life. It was in a library they met. He was traveling with his parents, and they stopped in a middle-sized town of western New York. It was an hour to lunch and he thought he would take a stroll and see the town. He had walked for about half an hour, when, almost without any warning, he was overtaken by a terrific downpour of rain. He

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looked about for a place of shelter, and noticed that he was standing near a public library. He walked in.

The library was in charge of a solitary young girl. He explained that he came in to seek protection from the rain, but as he was in, would she mind giving him such and such a book. He had heard a good deal about it and wanted to see it. She was very sorry, but the book was loaned out. Her voice was so soft, so sweet and vibrant that it thrilled him. Would he care to see some other book, or some of the recent magazines? And she handed him several.

He looked at her. She was slight and slim. She was dressed in black, with just a tiny bit of white around the collar and cuffs. The face was small and thin; it surely wasn't pretty; some might call it homely, others might call it beautiful, on account of the large, beautiful, earnest eyes, but pretty it was not. Yes,

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besides her beautiful, very beautiful eyes, he said to himself, there was another beautiful thing about her—her hair, her silky, jet black, abundant hair. And her entire figure was a delight. So perfect and supple; and it wasn't the corsets either that helped to make it perfect, for she wore no corsets, but this he found out only later.

He glanced thru the magazines, exchanged a few trivial remarks, and as the rain had stopped, and he was expected at the hotel for dinner, he left. But he left with a feeling of undefinable dissatisfaction, a strange regret. But in this feeling there was also a substratum of peculiar exaltation and buoyancy. Of course he didn't and couldn't give himself any account of his feelings. He didn't suspect that his feeling could in any way be related to the little librarian in the black dress. The next morning, very soon after the stroke of nine, at which hour he knew the

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library opened, he was in the reading room, apparently interested in the weekly comic papers.

But before we go any further, let us say a word about Arnold and—Esther, for Esther was the young librarian's name.

Arnold was twenty-one years old. His parents were not rich, but just fairly well off. His father was in business, the dry goods business, I believe. Arnold's mother died when he was six years old, and a year later his father married again. His stepmother was not very loving, either to him or to her own children, and Arnold withdrew into himself. He was a serious, timid boy, studied his lessons well, and as soon as he began to read books, he devoted all his spare time to reading. Books were his only companions. He went thru grammar school, high school and college, and now he was studying law. He did not have much taste for law, but his father thought that that would be the best career



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for him, and as no other profession made any special appeal to him, he consented. As a young man he remained the same serious, timid boy. All his free time he spent home, reading and studying. He never participated in the good times his fellow students invited him to. His high moral principles would not permit him, and he had no taste for any kind of pranks, excesses or license.

Esther was twenty-four years old. Yes, I regret to say, she was three years older than Arnold. If I were inventing a story, I would make the heroine younger. But in a true tale the facts must be stated as they were. To some people it might spoil the romance of the story; some people cannot imagine passionate love between a man and a woman, if the woman is older than the man; the woman, the girl, must always be several years younger than the man; but some of the noblest, most

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passionate and most constant unions that I have known, have been between men and women, the husbands younger than the wives. And so Esther was twenty-four years old. But she looked much younger. Not more than eighteen. Some ten years previously she had come over with her mother from Russia. Her father was killed in one of those horrible massacres, called pogroms, in which innocent and peaceful Jewish men, women and children are beaten, maimed, outraged and slaughtered, just for the fun of the populace. These massacres are organized with irregular periodicity by the brutalized, drunken mobs, with the support or at least the connivance of the brutal Russian government and its minions. The mob knows that the punishment will be merely nominal or none at all, and indulges in the wildest, most savage crimes and excesses. It was in trying to prevent the raping of a young Jewish girl by a drunken fiend, that

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Esther's father was killed. When, with all their property destroyed by the insane rabble, they emigrated to America, they had settled in the town of S——, because an uncle and aunt of Esther's had been living there for several years. Esther entered public school, was rapidly promoted from class to class and was graduated from high school with the highest honors. She began to teach school. But she was delicate. The horror of the massacre, the scene when her father, covered with blood, with his skull crushed, was carried into the house, the unconscious condition of her mother which lasted for several days, left an in-eraseable impression on her nervous system, and she could never become robust. School teaching had a bad effect on her, and the doctor told her she must give it up. Just at that time the city was endowed with a library, and the choice of a librarian fell upon her. She was well known and well beloved. Her mother had died two

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or three years after their removal to America, and she was now living with her aunt.

Had Arnold not been engrossed in the papers, he would have noticed that his arrival at the library was coincident with a sudden blush on the pale face of the little librarian. He would not have known whether his arrival was the cause of the blush, but he could not have failed to see that it was synchronous with it. But it *was* the direct cause of it. For when Arnold had left the library the previous day, Esther became aware of a sensation which she had never experienced before. In a little town in which you see the same faces over and over again, every new, strange face is apt to cause a pleasurable feeling. But this was a new, distinct sensation. When Arnold left, the room seemed so drearily empty, and she only mechanically filled the orders of the few visitors. Will

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she ever see him again? This question kept on recurring again and again.

Our psychologists have some important work to do to explain, if it ever can be explained, the rationale of love at first sight. Perhaps they will have to call in the aid of the exact sciences. Some students of the problem of the greatest sensation in the world, are trying to explain Love on purely chemical principles. They say that the sight of the beloved or to-be-beloved object excites a chemical reaction in the lover, starts up a kind of fermentation, which can be soothed or neutralized only by the presence or the possession of the beloved object. Be that as it may, it was love at first sight, in the case of Arnold and Esther.

When Arnold left that day, he knew that his happiness depended on Esther, and Esther knew that her life without Arnold would be a long, dreary, endless desert. She passed a restless night. She

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dreamed of a horrible massacre, in which Arnold's life was threatened, and she awoke with a start and a scream. She went to the library earlier than usual, and she had hardly opened the door when Arnold came in. They passed the forenoon in talking, and when he left for dinner each knew everything that was to be known of the other's life. He came after dinner and spent the afternoon with her. On the following day, he told her that he loved her, and that he would love her to the end of his days, and that of course he would marry her and nobody else. And Esther knew that he meant it, and she told him that she loved him from the first moment she saw him, and that he was her life and her ideal. He had to leave the following day, and he spent the evening with her. The parting was painful, but the absolute assurance of each other's complete and eternal possession, filled them with a hope and radiance that did not permit them to

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feel despair or experience any sadness. They knew they belonged to each other; they would live for each other, and they had an interest which would fill their lives forever.

They corresponded daily. It was soon after that Esther suggested that she didn't think law was the proper vocation for him. She told him that under our present social conditions, law was not a desirable profession, that strictly honest men could not practice it without injury to their idealism, for success in it depended principally in taking advantage of the other party's weakness; to be financially successful one must be unscrupulous and a bully. Altogether she did not think it the proper life-work for Arnold. He fully agreed with her. He felt the same way, before she wrote. They began to discuss what profession to select, and they decided on medicine. She wrote to him that medicine was the only profession a man could prac-

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tice without any loss of self-respect, and without any detriment to his ideals. Besides it offered a great field for discoveries and improvements. Since calling in the aid of the exact sciences, physics, chemistry and biology, it was itself becoming every year more and more of an exact science. And above everything, no other vocation brought one in so close and intimate relations with human life, and offered so many opportunities for doing good, and being helpful, as did the practice of medicine. And Arnold entered upon the study of medicine, the noblest of all studies, dealing with the alleviation of suffering, the prevention and cure of disease, and the prolongation of human life. His father objected at first to his son's changing his career, but at last he yielded to his arguments. Arnold put all his heart into his studies; whatever he did, he did with a will. His only recreation and pleasure was the daily letter from Esther.



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When the examinations of the first year were over, Arnold told his father that he was going to spend his vacation at S——. His father was surprised and asked for a reason, and Arnold told him. It was the first time that Arnold had referred to the subject. His father became furious and blustered. Arnold was pale but silent. He remained silent until his father made some disparaging remark about Esther, referring to her as probably being an adventuress, or something like that. And then Arnold told him calmly but tensely, that if he said another bad word about his beloved and future wife, he would leave the house at once and never return to it. And Arnold's father knew his son. Always submissive and yielding in little things, inflexible and unswervable in big things. He was permitted to have his own way. He spent a blissful summer with Esther. Their happiness was supreme, sublime. His love was not like

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a fire that bursts out into an all-consuming flame; it was a fire that burnt steadily, constantly, and forever. And so he spent the next three years: nine months of the year in the college and laboratory, three months with Esther.

Immediately after his graduation they were married. They lived an unclouded life, unmarred by a cross word or an unpleasant action. Their love seemed to grow stronger with each passing year. They had no children. A medical examination showed that it would be difficult for Esther to give birth to a child, that it might be dangerous to her life, and so he took precautions she should have no children. But they wanted to have children to care for and so they adopted one; then another and then still another. It was their idea that well-to-do people who had no children, were in duty bound to adopt some poor children and give them the benefits of the best possible environment and

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education. But with them it was not only a duty, but a pleasure. And they loved their adopted children just as much as if they had been of their own flesh and blood. One of the adopted children was what is called an illegitimate child.

Arnold was called in a hurry to the house of a well-known and well-to-do family. When he arrived there, he found that a girl in the house was to be delivered of a child, and he found that the girl was no other than the twenty-year-old unmarried daughter of the house. The father was in a condition of suppressed fury and anguish, the mother was in a continually recurring faint, and the new mother-to-be was in the agony of labor pains. He asked the parents to remove themselves from the room, as his duty was now only to the daughter, who had enough physical and mental torture to undergo, and it was no use making things worse than they were. Arnold was left alone with the

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daughter. His kind, earnest face and his sympathetic voice acted soothingly on the sufferer, and in six hours he had delivered her of a large, strong boy. The matter was conducted with the utmost secrecy. When on the eighth day he made his last visit, he learned that the intention was to send the child away to a foundling asylum, or to the home of some poor woman. Arnold offered to take the child and care for it for the rest of his life. And the boy grew up to bless his foster parents. His mother married some two years later, went to another city to live and exhibited no interest in her boy. Perhaps deep in her heart, she had some sentiment for him, but she thought it best and safest not to see him, and not to nurture that sentiment.

For ten years Arnold and Esther lived in supreme bliss. Then Esther began to ail. An affection of the heart valves which she had had for many years—it probably

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dated from the period of the horrors of the massacre—became considerably worse and forced her to take to bed. Any attempt to be up was followed by painful attacks of syncope, which on several occasions threatened to become fatal. So she made no further attempt to be up. Her bed was put near the window, looking out into the garden. And there she lay all the time, reading a book, or watching the children playing. The children idolized her, and all the time that they could spare from their studies, they spent in her bedroom. She loved to have them around her. She felt they would not have her for long. Arnold spent the greater part of the day with her. He gave to a colleague the greater part of his outside practice, attending only to such patients as could visit his office. This lasted for three years. Not once did his love wane, not once did his tenderness suffer any jar, not once did he find his voluntary imprisonment irk-

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some. To sit near Esther and pat her hands, or smooth her hair, to read to her, to tell her the news of the day, to whisper to her tender and loving words—this was his greatest pleasure, his greatest pleasure now just as much as in the days of courtship or during the first years of their married life.

Esther was gradually losing ground. She was so pitifully thin, her skin was so transparent that all over the veins could be seen like bluish streaks. And her attacks of dyspnea were getting more frequent and more severe. One evening she drew Arnold to herself.

“Let me kiss you, dearest,” she said. She now spoke in a scarcely audible whisper. “I feel that this will be my last night.” He broke out in a sob. “Don’t cry, dearest. Promise me you will brace up. Let me thank you for your love, and for the happy years you have given me. I would love to live, for your sake, but it is

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not to be. I die content. No woman had a happier married life than I. Do not cry, love. Do not make the last hours harder for me. For my sake do not cry. And promise me you will be strong."

She became silent, exhausted. Her eyes closed, and only by carefully listening could Arnold make out that she was breathing. He felt his heart would burst, but by a supreme effort he restrained his sobs, tho he could not restrain his tears. He remained all night at the head of the bed; towards morning he heard a hoarse whisper, in which he could distinguish the words: "Arnold, Arnold, help,"—and she was gone.

He remained stunned. In the morning he was found sitting in the same place, holding Esther's cold hands. He did not cry; he remained dead, apathetic. Friends begged him to brace up, and he came somewhat to himself. But he was good

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for nothing. He seemed to be in a daze. A friend took it upon himself to attend to all the funeral arrangements. When Esther was put into the coffin, he gave a sudden lurch, and would have fallen prone to the ground, if not caught by those around him. He was put in a carriage, and his friends spoke to him firmly and gently. They told him that he owed it to her whom he loved so much to brace up and be a man. Oh, yes, she also asked him to brace up and he promised her. He must try. By a supreme effort of the will, he succeeded in acting in a normal manner. But when the coffin was lowered into the grave, and he was handed the shovel to throw some earth onto it, he fell in a dead faint. It took the better part of half an hour to bring him to. It was feared at one time that the syncope would prove fatal.

And now there began for Arnold a period of extreme suffering and torture.



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The three years' vigil over Esther, combined with the shock of her death, produced a state of complete nervous exhaustion. He was unable to walk unless supported by two people, he could eat nothing, and worst of all, he became afflicted with the greatest of all curses, an obstinate insomnia, which resisted all treatment. The most eminent physicians took a great personal interest in him, and the most ingenious combinations of hypnotics were suggested and prescribed for him. But they had only a feeble, temporary effect, or none at all. His lack of appetite and lack of sleep caused him to lose flesh rapidly—he looked like a living skeleton—and fears were entertained for the integrity of his mind. At the same time, any attempt to take him out for a drive into the fresh air, was followed by dangerous fainting spells. He spent a year in bed. His practice was, of course, given up. The house was being neg-

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lected. He became a sore problem to his friends.

One of them, his best and bluntest friend, decided to have a talk with him. He knew that with neurasthenics only blunt talk could have any effect. He told him that his conduct was a disgrace, both to the memory of Esther, and to his children. He had a duty to his children whom he had adopted; they were being neglected, they felt themselves not only motherless, which was hard enough for them, but also fatherless. Whether time was having its healing effect, or whether his friend's conversation changed the current of his thoughts, but he began to improve slowly. In three months he was able to leave the house, and three or four months later he began slowly to attend to his practice.

Six years have passed since Esther's death. Arnold is paler, more reserved than he was, he is somewhat stoop-

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shouldered, but he attends to his work and his duties earnestly and industriously. No woman exists for him, for the best and gentlest and cleverest women possess one irremediable defect: they are not Esther. And a week seldom passes, that in the midst of his work, he does not take his autocar and run over to the city of the dead, where a granite stone marks the resting place of Esther. He will sit there an hour, sometimes two; he will sit and meditate, and usually weep. His free-thinking friends call it superstition and morbid sentimentality, but who can fully comprehend the psychology of another man's soul?

And if one should take the trouble to pass a night near the door of Arnold's bedroom and listen, he would often hear somebody quietly sobbing, sobbing. . . .



THE RISE OF RICHARD MAR-  
TINDALE

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To

Marie Robinson

SWEET, DAINTY AND LOYAL



## THE RISE OF RICHARD MARTINDALE

**I**T is a glorious day. Not a cloud-let in the azure sky. The god of the sun is caressing the earth with his warm rays and the Adriatic Sea, stretching boundlessly beyond the horizon, is waving invitations to all living creatures to come and taste the delicious coolness of its waters.

And men, women and little children joyfully accept the invitation. And as you watch them in the water, splashing, swimming, teaching others to swim, somersaulting and indulging in all kinds of pranks, they make a pretty picture, a happy picture, and one is ready to agree for the nonce with the optimist, that this is a good world, the best of all possible worlds. And the grayish-white warm sand of the Lido beach is covered with gay colored humanity. The children run

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about with their balls and hoops, or build mountains or throw sand into each other's faces; the young maidens disport their pretty bathing suits while listening to the compliments or amorous declarations of their ephemeral admirers; others lie prostrated on the sand, enjoying the warmth, the sunshine, the sky, the salty odor of the sea and wishing that it might always be so.

And the children!

The happy children! It is hard to tear one's self away from them. Free of care, happy, full of exuberant spirits and animal vitality—for they are children of the rich—they romp about with their expensive toys, build figures and castles out of sand and quickly destroy them, bury their playmates under little mounds, run to the edge of the water to the discomfiture of their nurses and governesses, squeal, scream and run away—and are as happy as only children can be. In the future all



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children will be happy—there will be no tenement starvelings, no child labor slaves, no tots in cotton mills, no babies in factories, and no little mothers with the cares and the faces of old women.

But let us be glad that at least some children are happy—and the children on the beach are all supremely happy.

All, except one.

He lies flat on his back, with his face wistfully upturned to the sky. He lies for hours at a time, apparently thinking, thinking. His governess and then his mother asks him to go for a little stroll, but he refuses. He lies and thinks and listens. His acute ear catches the talk of the children, and failing to understand some of the words, his sweet delicately chiseled little face twitches convulsively, and at times he seems to be on the point of crying. But he knows that his crying hurts his mother, and he therefore won't cry. No, he won't. He has even given

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up asking questions of his mother, for he noticed that his questions distressed her and sometimes would even make her cry. And for nothing, nothing in the world would he make his beloved mamma cry. Never again will he torment her with questions as to what is red, what is blue, what is the difference between black and white. Never will he ask her why he is so different from other children, why they can go about all by themselves, while he always needs somebody to lead him. In short, he will never ask his mother the reason why God made him blind. For little Rostand Martindale is blind, completely blind.

And while Rostand lies stretched on the sand, thinking—whatever can his little brain think about—with his mother painfully tho resignedly watching over him, Richard Martindale, Rostand's father, sits in a wicker chair, on the hotel veranda, looks out on the beach and over the surf,

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smokes a cigar and thinks. His thoughts are apparently not very cheerful ones, for his face is clouded and it costs him some effort to smile back at his wife, when she smiles at him from below. He puffs at his cigar slowly and as the curls of smoke dissolve into fantastic shapes, his life passes before him in rapid view.

His childhood was happy and cloudless. He always had everything he wanted. While he was not particularly brilliant in his studies, he got along well and never failed in any examinations. His parents were very indulgent to him, perhaps too indulgent, he thinks bitterly. He always had more money than he needed or knew what to do with. But his real life commenced when he entered college. He was rapidly introduced to different phases of life, with which up to that time he had been entirely unfamiliar. He proved an adept pupil. The morals of the college students were rather elastic, and things

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which at home he would have condemned as wrong and wicked, he here accepted as a matter of course, because his fellow students said it was all right and all or almost all acted the same way.

It was during his third year in college that he met Ida Rosen. Tho he had lost much of the youthful innocence which he had brought with him to college, he was not blasé, like so many of his friends. Yes, he remembers distinctly, he still respected women; he still believed that there were good women, and he still refused to consider all women as playthings, made for man's pleasure and amusement, and to be discarded when they became a bore.

He was struck by the healthy beauty of Ida's face, a beauty which knew nothing of paint or powder, by her innocent limpid eyes, by her glorious hair, which had no need of puffs and switches, by the sweet charm of her manners. She was a sales-girl in one of the department stores, but—

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he smiled when he thought of it—when they got better acquainted she surprised him by her culture. He felt humiliated at the thought that she was more familiar with modern literature than he was—he, the college student. He does not remember now whether it was love at first sight, but he remembers that very soon after he met her he was deeply in love with her and had made up his mind that he could not live without her. It so seemed to him. He began to pay visits to the store in which Ida worked. He was a good customer—in Ida's department. But soon his visits began to excite attention and Ida became the butt of the other store employés who twitted her on her admirer. She had to request him to cease his visits.

He then asked her to meet him in the evening. She refused. But he was so persistent, he assured her so earnestly that no harm would ever come to her, her life was so drab and dreary, and—as she con-

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fessed later on—she took so much pleasure in his company, that she finally yielded. He thought with pleasure of those walks in the evening, when merely being by her side was a delight, when the conversation about nothing in particular was bliss, and when he felt his love for her was pure and unselfish. But while woman can be satisfied with the mere closeness of her beloved one, man can not. He may at first, but after a time, he demands more. Where a pressure of the hand sufficed at first, he now must have kisses and embraces. While Ida was perfectly happy to close the day with a walk by the side of Martindale, he began to tire of just walking. He began to take her to theaters, to restaurants, on steamboat outings. And one beautiful summer night the inevitable happened.

After that he did not permit her to go back to the store. She was to be his wife and he could not permit her to work as a

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salesgirl in a drygoods store for nine dollars a week. He rented a little flat for her where he could visit her to his heart's content. Ida passed three months of exquisite happiness. Only one thing marred it, she told him. Every now and then, when he would be away, a terrible fear would seize her, that such happiness could not last; she did not deserve such happiness, and no human being could stand such bliss for long. It is the blighted result of our vicious bringing up; of our cruel theologic teachings, that happiness is something improper, something to apologize for. But her fear was general, vague, indefinite. She had no misgivings as to Richard. He, she knew and she told him so repeatedly, would not forsake her, he would stand by her, no matter what happened. And so he thought himself. She had nobody in the world but him, and without him life to her would be intolerable.

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One morning she told him that she feared she was pregnant. He took the news, he remembers, with rather bad grace. For that meant the need of some definite decision, taking a radical step. And he did not like definite decisions and radical steps. To her the thing seemed very plain: all they had to do was to get married. He called her his dear little wife; she was his wife in fact; all he had to do was to make her his wife before the world and before the law. He thought so too.

Fain would he cast the mantle of impenetrable oblivion over all that followed: the stormy scenes with his father, the repeated swoonings of his mother—she could swoon very conveniently—the angry contemptuous looks of his sisters, who were afraid that their chances would be spoiled by their brother making a *mésalliance*. The horror of it—a Martindale marrying a salesgirl! No, it could not be allowed. And then his forcible packing off to Eu-



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rope. Was it really forcible? Considering now things calmly and being strictly honest with himself, he was bound to confess that it was not altogether forcible. That in the depth of his heart he was grateful to his parents for compelling him to part with Ida. For he began to fear that Ida was not a proper wife for him. And he began to find faults in Ida. Any man who begins to tire of his wife or his mistress has no difficulty in finding excuses for his tired feeling, finds it very easy to discover a whole list of defects.

And then coming to think of it, he never really promised to marry her. Oh, how he blushed now at this contemptible, cowardly thought! Many cowards try to justify their craven conscience by this dishonest subterfuge—that they have given no formal promise to marry. That all their actions were promises, that it was so self-understood that the poor girl would

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have considered it a deadly insult to either doubt it or to ask any questions, is of little significance with them. But he thought with satisfaction that he did not enjoy his European trip. Ida's face stood before him when awake, it stood before him when he was asleep. What has become of her? How did she take his good-bye letter? And were the two hundred dollars that he enclosed of any use to her in getting her out of her difficulty? And what was she doing now? All these questions kept on recurring to his mind, but the answers to them he was to learn only on his return to America.

His mother, who accompanied him to Europe, noticing his depression, tried to argue with him, upbraiding him for his infatuation for an "unprincipled adventuress," who, she was sure, only wanted him for his position and his money; but when she saw that her arguments had an effect just contrary to what she expected,

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she left him alone. And he liked it better so.

Six months they traveled in Europe. The rich can afford such luxuries. Towards the end his young nature began to assert itself. The beautiful scenery, the interesting sights, the new customs and languages, the numerous people, the be vies of dainty, fresh, refined young girls he came in contact with, began to produce their effect on him, and the multitude of new impressions began to efface the old ones. Ida's face appeared at rarer intervals, and the question of her sufferings, or what had become of her, did not present itself with the same implacable insistence as before. And when he did think of her, his evil genius would whisper to him: Oh, such things happen every day, and his conscience would be satisfied. At least he would try to make himself believe that it was, tho in his subconsciousness he would feel that that was no excuse, that

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he was lying to himself and that his wound was not really healed from the bottom, that it was merely granulated on the surface, was merely patched over with a thin layer of adhesive plaster. And he felt that it would require but a slight pressure of circumstances to tear that plaster away, and to make the wounds of his heart and conscience reopen and bleed anew.

He had been barely a month in New York when his longing for Ida or perhaps his great pity for her returned in full force. He had to see her, he had to find out what had become of her. But where to look?

He walked the streets, he visited the various department stores, thinking that perhaps she took another position, he inserted somewhat masked personal ads. in the newspapers, but all in vain. There was no trace of Ida. A year passed. He had been graduated from college in the meantime, passing a rather mediocre ex-

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amination, and to find Ida became now his *idée fixe*.

He told a newspaper friend the whole story, and begged him to help him find Ida Rosen if alive. If she was dead, he had to know the circumstances under which she died. Ida Rosen! The name was familiar to his friend. He thought he had heard it, he thought she had figured in the newspapers. Some three days later he brought Martindale a file of old newspapers in which the gruesome story was told, with harrowing details, photographs and illustrations, of how a young girl, Ida Rosen, threw herself in the river, how she was rescued by a burly policeman who jumped after her in full uniform, how dangerously ill she became—the shock produced a miscarriage—so that she had to be taken from the station-house to the hospital, how for several weeks she hovered in the hospital between life and death, and how finally she recovered and was dis-

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charged by the magistrate with a suspended sentence. Some of the yellow newspapers got wind that the author of Ida's troubles was a rich young man, the scion of an aristocratic family. The reporters and special story writers tried by wiles, ruses and threats to get Ida to divulge the name of the young man, but all their endeavors to make a sensational salacious story proved unavailing. Ida obstinately, and without disguising her contempt, refused to utter as much as a syllable on the subject.

What became of her afterward the newspaper friend did not know. He promised to try to find out. He made inquiries at the Police Headquarters, and there he was told that they thought she had "gone to the bad."

One evening he met her. When she saw him coming, she wanted to run back, run, run as fast as she could. But her feet refused to move. And then Martin-

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dale was upon her and held her fast by the wrist. She tried to avoid his eyes. She covered her face with her free hand, that pale, almost unrecognizable face, on which there were expressed horror, doubt, shame and humiliation—and joy. And then she broke out into quiet sobs which shook her small emaciated body.

He took her into a side street and spoke to her lovingly, soothingly. They went into a quiet little French restaurant and there they talked. That is, she talked. He begged her to tell him all, to relieve her overburdened, bursting heart.

And he heard the sordid, painful, pitiful story of her disheartening struggles, after her discharge by the hospital and the court; with what scant courtesy she was treated when she applied for a position at the drygoods stores and how finally unable to stand the hunger any longer—his check she destroyed in a fit of passion together with the letter—and threatened

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with dispossess from her little hall-room, she took up the shameful trade she was now pursuing. Why she hadn't tried again to make an end of it all? It seemed to her as if that question was in his mind (tho it wasn't). Because she was too unhappy, and *too indifferent to life to attempt suicide*. She had no pride, no ambition, no *manhood* left. In order to commit suicide a person must still possess *some love of life*. He or she must have some of their ideals left, some shame, some manhood. Those who have sunk to the lowest rung of the ladder do not commit suicide. Ida had no life left in her, and for this reason she did not seek death. And the horror, humiliation and notoriety attendant upon her first unsuccessful attempt were still fresh in her memory and restrained her from making a second attempt.

And as she was trying to explain and justify herself—as if she needed justifi-



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cation—she broke out again into uncontrollable sobs. He soothed her.

“Whatever you are,” he told her as he now recollected with satisfaction, “I have made you so. You are not to blame. I am the only one that is guilty. But it is all over; there will be an end to all your troubles. I have been a brute, but I will make amends, and you shall yet be a happy woman.”

“Too late,” she replied in her sad pathetic voice, “I have no life left in me and my heart is broken. I do not even know whether I am a safe person to associate with. There was a time when I could have made you a fit mate for life, but not now.”

But, of course, he would not give in. He tried to persuade her. And tho she felt that it was more duty than love that spoke in him, she let herself be persuaded. Who can willfully, deliberately push away happiness or the promise of happiness

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from one's self? A drowning man cannot refuse the life-saving belt or raft, a man parched with thirst cannot refuse the sparkling draught which he knows will allay his agony, and a human being living in shame, penury, fear and humiliation cannot refuse the helping hand of a friend, especially when that friend was once a lover, a lover whose mere presence was still supreme happiness for her. Her present life was so horrible, that any change from it would be a salvation. And tho she did not mean to keep it up for long—so she confessed to him later on—she did so long for a little of the former pleasures, of the former happiness, which he had promised her would be permanent, and which ended so suddenly, so quickly, so abruptly.

She moved into a new neighborhood, and he began to visit her frequently. Not as frequently as she might have wished, but as frequently as he could without ex-

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citing his parents' suspicions. She regained some of her former beauty and health, but not happiness. While he tried to convince her to the contrary, she felt that this was but temporary, that it could not last forever or for long. And when he spoke of marrying her as soon as he got some independent position, she only smiled sadly. So sadly that now after the lapse of so many years it still hurt him.

A succession of events brought about the tragic dénouement. One evening as he was taking her to the theater, two painted and powdered damsels came up to them. They greeted her effusively, saying how glad they were to see her, and how they wondered what had become of her. She shrank back in fear and humiliation, without responding to their greeting. They passed on muttering some coarse remark about her being stuck up because she landed a rich "sucker." The evening in theater was spoiled. They hardly ex-

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changed a word. Her former life stood before her in all its hideousness, and his heart was heavy. The next day she spoke to him. She insisted that he must leave her, that she was not a proper companion for him. Life is not a slate, from which you can wipe off the disagreeable facts by passing a sponge over them. Certain events leave their indelible marks, which nothing can erase, nothing can obliterate, nothing can even cover up. But he was man enough to laugh at her suggestion. He said that it was only a matter of time, when her past would be forgotten by herself and others, and they would be able to live openly and peacefully.

At about the same time his newspaper friend found out about his relations with Ida, and out of pure friendship he considered it his duty to notify Martindale's parents. He wanted to save him from an entanglement which would be sure to stand in the way of his future, which might

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entirely ruin his career. Another terrific scene between his hardhearted and dictatorial father and himself. High words were exchanged, and the result was an ultimatum: to give up that "wretch" at once or to leave the house. He left the house. When Ida learned of it, she did not say anything, but she began to get ready to escape, to leave New York, so that he could not find her. With the self-sacrifice of women who love truly, she did not want to be in his way, she did not want to ruin his "future." He discovered her plans and reprimanded her severely. He told her that he would follow her anywhere, that he would not go back home, that he would stand by her thru thick and thin, and that she should not make it harder for him than it was. She might have let him persuade her—we are easily persuaded toward things which are the sweetness and happiness of life—but one morning she noticed that she was suf-

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fering with a well-known infectious disease. The germs of the disease must have been dormant in her for some time. And she thought with horror that she must also have given the disease to Martindale. And tho he tried to conceal it from her, she found out that she did infect him, that he was suffering from the same disease. It was apparently in a mild form, but, as the doctor told him, some of the mild forms of the disease leave sometimes very severe sequelæ. And then her mind was made up.

The following morning he received a letter from Ida. He was surprised, as she was not in the habit of writing to him. And he was to see her the same day. When he opened the letter, a cold sweat came out on his forehead and his heart stood still. He remembers every word of it, for he still has it in his possession, and he has read it many, many times. It ran as follows:

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*Dearly beloved friend:* I have decided to take the final fatal step. This is the only solution. You know as I do, that I cannot become your wife. My heart is broken, my spirit is crushed, my body is diseased. If you have sinned against me, you have tried nobly to expiate it, and I thank you with all my soul for the additional happiness which you have allowed me to taste. I have loved you from the minute I saw you, and I love you now, and because I love you it is best I should die (and this time I will make sure). From the moment I saw you my thoughts have been of you only, and my last thought will be of you. I am a victim of our unjust social conditions. Not the first, not the last. If I may leave a last request, it is you should devote your life to work which will improve our social conditions, and which will perhaps make such victims unnecessary. I beg of you, do nothing after you receive this letter. It will be too

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late to do anything. Do nothing rash, that will bring you into useless notoriety, which can serve no purpose except to make your family unhappy. Heart of my heart, life of my life, I embrace you and kiss you. The little happiness in my life I owe all to you. I kiss you. Yours forever,

IDA.

Even now, so many years after, he was touched to tears by that last letter of love. How even at the last solemn moment all her thoughts, all her solicitude was for him and him only!

His first impulse was to run to her room. But as he went into the street, the newsboys were already screaming their extras. "Beautiful girl commits suicide." And he bought the paper and read the harrowing details. And he thought of the unpleasantness to himself, of the nasty insinuations of the newspapers, of the painful notoriety that would result to his father and mother and sisters. And so



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he refrained from going. The affair soon blew over. He received a letter from his father telling him that his absence was killing his mother and asking him to come home. He returned to the parental roof. His grief was respected and he was let alone.

Years passed. Ida became a vague and cherished memory. He met Elaine Studiford on one of his European trips. A warm friendship followed, and he asked to be permitted to call, on their return to the United States, which permission was readily granted. In three months he proposed and was accepted. He loved Elaine, tho he confessed to himself that it was not with the same elemental passion that he had loved Ida. But he knew that it was a love that would endure, for it was based on genuine affection and respect. She was not a silly butterfly, but a girl who was familiar with modern advanced literature and did a good deal of thinking

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on her own account. He told her of his affair with Ida, tho he didn't consider it necessary to tell her all the details. The story caused her an unpleasant hour, but she got over it quickly. As a sensible girl she knew that very few young men that amount to anything reach Richard's age without having had some love affair. He did not tell her, however, of the infectious disease that he had had. What was the use bringing up such disagreeable details? It was a mild attack and he was cured long ago.

How much would he have given for the advice to have had himself subjected to a thoro examination at the hands of a competent authority. How much lifelong irremediable suffering he would have avoided, he, his wife and his only child, if he had done that? But such an idea did not even come into his head. The family doctor who had treated him told him he was cured, and did not suggest that in

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years to come before entering matrimony it might be advisable to subject himself to an examination.

Both Richard and Elaine disliked pompous notoriety and they were married quietly. As he had decided to devote himself to literary work, they took a house in a small town near New York, and there they lived happily and peacefully, only coming down to the Metropolis to attend a lecture, a dinner, a play, or to get some books. A year later Elaine gave birth to a child—a bouncing boy. The doctor who attended her thought that the child's eyes looked somewhat red and puffy, but he paid no particular attention to that, only telling the nurse to wash them with boric acid solution. The condition instead of getting better was getting steadily worse, and very soon the horrible suspicion flashed upon the doctor's mind that he was having to deal with a case of ophthalmia neonatorum of a very virulent type.

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Specialists were hurried from New York, one with several nurses stayed there day and night, and tho everything known to skill and science was done to save the baby's eyesight, all was in vain. The child became totally blind.

This was a cruel blow to Richard Martindale, the cruelest blow fate has ever yet dealt him. He became morose, irritable, and he ached at the cruelty of fate and the injustice and stupidity of the world. Mrs. Martindale was completely prostrated. Besides, she was ailing with some internal trouble, which kept her in bed for several weeks. The specialists explained to Richard the nature of his wife's trouble, which was also the cause of the boy's blindness. Mrs. Martindale and he himself were treated by one of New York's best specialists, until they could be pronounced radically cured. The doctor said, however, that while Mrs. Martindale would probably never have any

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trouble, he feared that she was not very likely to give birth to any more children. They were very anxious to have at least one more child, and Mrs. Martindale took every treatment that had in it the slightest promise of success, but as the months and then the years passed by, the doctor's fear proved well-founded. Mrs. Martindale was another victim added to the thousands and thousands of victims of "one-child sterility." And so he will have to go thru life with poor delicate blind Rostand, whose mere presence is a constant reproach, whose every groping step is a stab in his heart.

And Richard Martindale thinks it all over. He wonders if, after all, there is not a Nemesis on this earth even for people who have freed themselves from religious superstitions and theologic dogmas; if every immoral, unjust or anti-social act does not carry within it its own punishment. And isn't there something noble

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in the idea of the expiation of sin? But, of course, expiation of sin should not consist in hermitic seclusion, in self-castigation, which is of no use to anybody. It should consist in active, efficient social work, work which should help dry the tears and diminish the terrible, terrible suffering of humanity. For, in spite of the progress we have made, humanity's suffering is still world-wide and ocean-deep. This at least he is doing. For the sins he has committed against Ida, against Rostand and against beloved, patient non-murmuring Elaine he is trying to expiate to the best of his ability. He is devoting all his time and fortune to the enlightenment of the people, to the breaking down of social barriers, to the eradication of cruel superstitions and racial hatred, to the amelioration of our economic conditions. He is giving all his life to the bringing about of a better and saner social system, where there will be less hun-

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ger, less poverty, less weeping, less heart-breaking, less suffering, less agony, less hatred and less disease. To this work he is devoting every fiber of his soul—and he finds in Elaine a willing helpmate—and his work is bearing fruit.

\* \* \*

And the god of the sun is caressing the earth with his warm rays. And the Adriatic Sea stretching boundlessly beyond the horizon is waving invitations to all living creatures to come in and taste the delicious coolness of her waters. And the soft, snowy-white clouds which have in the meantime appeared from somewhere, hurry past as if on a mission bent, and disappear in the East.

It is a glorious day.





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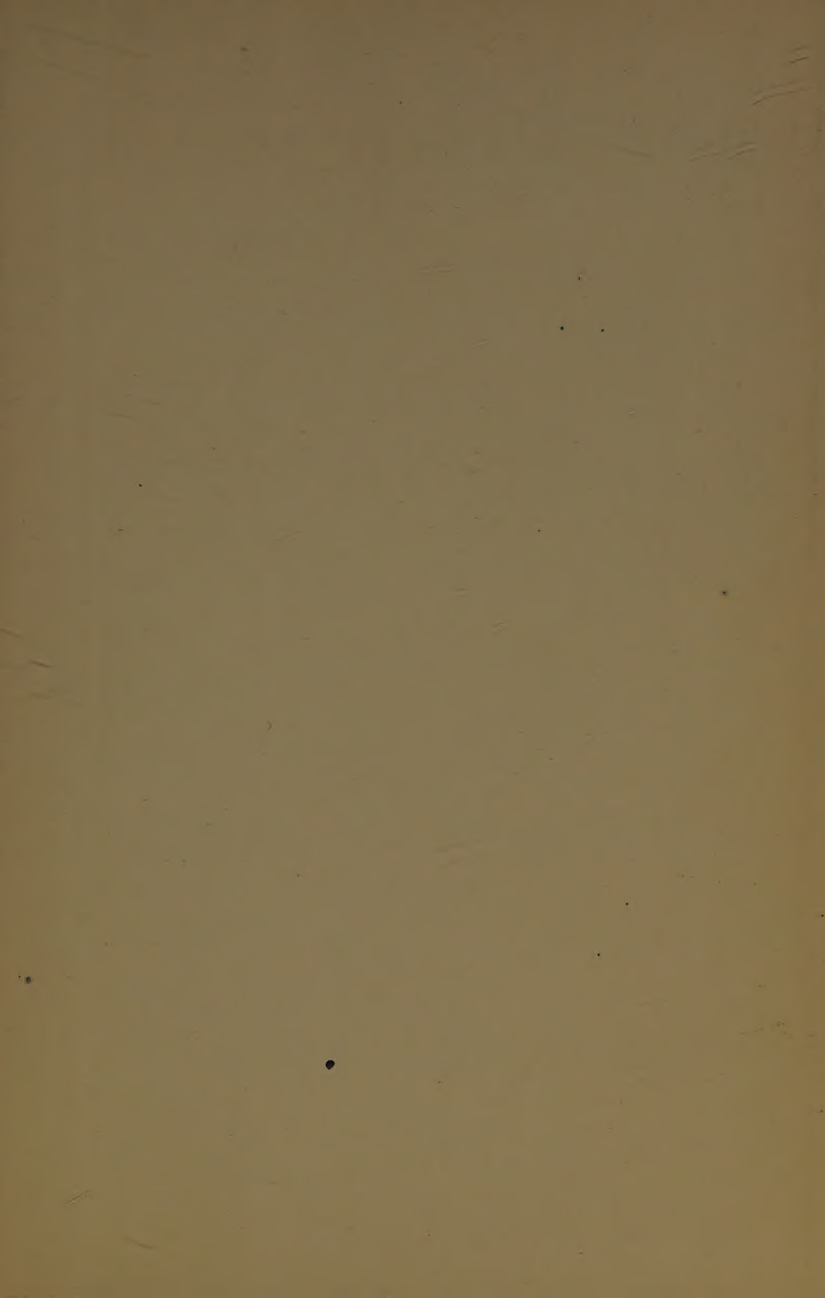
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